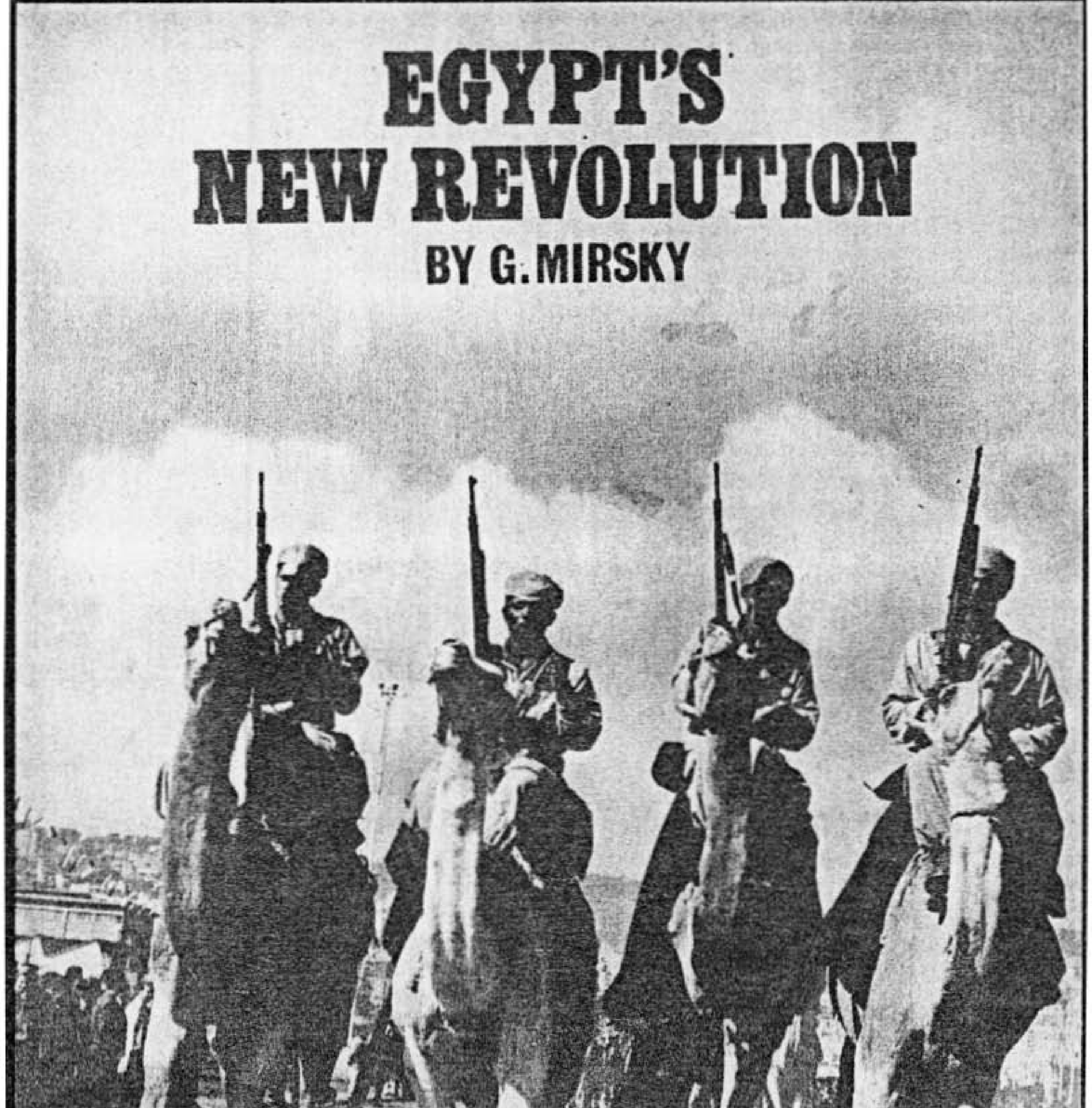
The African Communist

NO 41 SECOND QUARTER 1970

EGYPT'S NEW REVOLUTION

BY G. MIRSKY



PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS OF LENIN: S.P. BUNTING.

PRICE PER COPY

AFRICA: 1 shilling (E. Africa), 10 cents (S.A.) or equivalent in local currency.
ELSEWHERE: 2s 6d (U.K.), 50 cents (U.S.) or equivalent.

SUBSCRIPTION

AFRICA: 4 shillings or equivalent.
U.K. & EUROPE
1 year (four issues) 10s.
2 years 15s.
U.S. & CANADA
1 year $1.50 (Airmail $3)
2 years $2.25 (Airmail $5)
STUDENTS: 25% discount on Surface mail subscriptions

AGENTS

Usual trade discount (one-third of retail price) to bookshops and sellers ordering 12 or more copies

EDITORIAL

Articles, letters material for articles and comments are invited on all themes of African interest, but payment is by prior arrangement only

ADDRESS

All correspondence to the distributor:

Inkululeko Publications
39 Goodge Street
London, W.I England

THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST

Published quarterly in the interests of
African solidarity, and as a forum for
Marxist-Leninist thought throughout
our Continent, by the
South African Communist Party

No. 41 Second Quarter 1970

Contents

5 *Editorial Notes*

HOMAGE TO LENIN
NIGERIA – PEACE AND RECONCILIATION
SMITH'S 'REPUBLIC'
SACTU: FIFTEEN YEARS
THE COLOURED PEOPLE
RAISING THE STANDARD

19 **LENIN – A PERSONAL IMPRESSION**

S.P. Bunting

This article was published in The International, *organ of the Communist Party of South Africa in January 1924 on the occasion of the death of Lenin. The writer, S.P. Bunting (1873-1936) was one of the founders of the International Socialist League (1915) and subsequently of the Communist Party (1921.) Apart from ts historic interest, the short article affords a fascinating glimpse of what Lenin 'really was like'.*

22 **THE 'NEW REVOLUTION' IN THE U.A.R.**

G. Mirsky

Far-reaching developments have taken place in Egypt since the Israeli aggression of June 1967. Here Dr. Mirsky, noted Soviet conomist, presents a highly-readable but closely reasoned account of the course of events in the UAR, both before and during the present war, and the interplay of the interests of various classes and social forces.

41 **LESOTHO – BACKGROUND TO THE COUP**

Nxele

Following the February general election in Lesotho, the former Prime Minister, Leabua Jonathan – seeing that he had lost the majority – seized power, suspending the constitution and arresting both the ('Victorious') opposition and the constitutional head of state, King Moshoeshoe II. Our contributor traces the historical background of this small country, whose territory is completely surrounded by the Republic of South Africa, as well as the forces behind Jonathan, well-known for his servile attitude to the South African fascists.

Contents *(continued)*

57 THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY

William L. Patterson

World-wide protests have been evoked by the U.S. court frame-ups of Bobby Seale and other leaders of the militant Black Panther Party. This article describes the origin and development of the Panthers. and gives a Marxist assessment of their role. The author, himself of African origin, is a veteran of the fight for the rights of the black people in America. He is also a leading member of the U.S. Communist Party, from whose journal Political Affairs *the article is reprinted.*

68 AFRICA: NOTES AND COMMENTS

Nxele *writes on the Khartoum Meeting of Heads of State of the East and Central African States; the fighting in Zimbabwe; and the ending of the war in Nigeria.*

80 U.S. 'SOUL' MUSIC IN AFRICA

J.K. Obatala

The writer, though of African descent, is a United States student currently working in Ghana. Here he describes how Afro-American music is used as a means of cultural penetration for the US ruling class. He subtitled his article: 'Soul' and the Myth of Afro-American Affluence: Imperialism's 'New Bag' in Africa.

90 BOOK REVIEWS

The Africans by Basil Davidson, *The Liberation of Guine* By Basil Davidson, *Revolution in Guinea* by Amilcar Cabral, *La Revolution en Afrique* by Joao Mendes, *The Struggle for Mozambique* by Eduardo Mondlane, *Reporting Africa* by Anirudha Gupta, *Nationalism and Economic Development in Ghana* by Roger Genoud, *Mandabi* (film review).

114 DOCUMENTS

UN Debate on the 'legitimacy' of liberation wars; Conference on Leninism and the World Revolutionary Process (S. African contribution.)

120 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editorial Notes:

HOMAGE TO LENIN

Vladimir Ilyitch Lenin was born in Russia on April 22, 1870. The centenary of his birthday will be commemorated in every part of the world by all who cherish human liberation, who strive to abolish oppression and the exploitation of man by man. Lenin was not only the leader of the world's first victorious socialist revolution, and head of the first Soviet state; he was the much loved leader of the workers and oppressed people of the whole world.

Karl Marx before him had pointed out that, while philosophers had interpreted the world in various ways: **the point, however, is to change it.**

No man of our century has done more to change the world than Lenin. More than anyone else, he embodied the spirit of our times and the future. He died in 1924, thirty-six years ago, yet who surveying the world today could deny that his ideas, his influence, and the consequences of his deeds are more potent, more alive in the world, than ever?

We of Africa have particular reason to celebrate and pay tribute to Lenin. Amilcar Cabral of Guinea said truly that 'Lenin was, and continues to be, the greatest champion of the national liberation of the peoples.' In deeply true and moving words, Comrade Cabral said:

> *How is it that we, a people deprived of everything, living in dire straits, manage to wage our struggle and win successes? Our answer is: because Lenin existed, because he fulfilled his duty as a man, a revolutionary and patriot.*

We, of the South African Communist Party, followers of Lenin, have resolved to do our utmost to see that the liberating ideas of Leninism are brought home to our people in this centenary year. The fascist racialists who misrule our country hate the very name of Lenin. To advocate and defend his ideas is specifically made a serious crime in the 1950 Suppression of Communism Act; his followers are ruthlessly persecuted. For that very reason, if for no other, his name has become a banner of liberation to the masses.

'Study the works of Lenin!' This was the call of the message of the 75 Communist and Workers' Parties from every continent who met in Moscow last June. 'In them you will find an inexhaustible source of inspiration for the struggle against reaction and oppression, for socialism and peace.'

To study Lenin's complete writings is a formidable task. His 'Collected Works' fill 45 volumes in the English edition to be completed this year. A splendid introduction however is now available in the new, one-volume edition of 'Selected Works'. Its 800 pages include some of Lenin's most seminal books, of crucial importance to the full understanding of present-day world and African realities. *Imperialism – the Highest Stage of Capitalism* is the most profound analysis of the main enemy which Africa faces; it explains both colonialism and neo-colonialism from their economic roots. *The State and Revolution* goes to the heart of that phenomenon, still too little understood in our continent – the state. *'Left-Wing' Communism – an Infantile Disorder* and *Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Bourgeois- Democratic Revolution* are both studies in revolutionary strategy and tactics whose reading is essential to all who strive for a free, united, socialist Africa. We urge all our readers to obtain and master this invaluable 'handbook for all seasons.'

The Editorial Board of this journal will continue to publish material on this theme throughout its issues of Lenin Year, 1970. In this issue, we reprint a rare article giving a fascinating first-hand impression of Lenin himself, written by S.P. Bunting, one of the founders of the International Socialist League (later the Communist Party) of South Africa. Our 'Documents' section also contains the remarks of the South African representative at the Conference on 'Leninism and the World Revolutionary Process Today' held on February 23 in Moscow. Our next issue will feature a deeply-researched study by Professor A.B. Davidson on Lenin and the foundation (1921) of the Communist Party of South Africa.

We fully support and will do our best to carry out the rousing call of the 75-Party statement on this notable anniversary:

'Let us raise higher the banner of Leninism in the struggle for the revolutionary renovation of the world!

'Long live Leninism!'

With the ending of the Nigerian civil war, whose two and a half years exacted a frightful toll of death and privation on both sides, a real hope of peaceful reconciliation and unity has been brought to this great, populous and important African state. The closing months and weeks of this tragic conflict did much to reveal some of the realities which had been concealed behind a fog of propaganda and rival claims.

Much clearer, too, in the closing stages became the nature and motives of those non-African forces who had become the main prop of Biafran secession. Imperialist France, aiming to get her hands on rich oil deposits; West Germany and the Unholy Alliance of Fascist Portugal and white-dominated Southern Africa, aiming as ever to disrupt African unity and gain a political, economic and military foothold in the heart of Independent Africa. And various Christian bodies, particularly the Roman Catholic Church, with their incorrigible missionary paternalism, and their meddling (as in Southern Sudan and Lesotho) in African affairs. 32 religious groups, called Joint Church Aid flew into 'Biafra' each night (from Portugal's slave island of Sao Tome) an average of 300 tons of supplies – and continued to do so even after it had been criticised by the World Council of Churches on December 5, 1969, for prolonging the war.

Many more facts have come to light – such as Ojukwu's massive enrolment of white mercenaries including the blood-drenched murderers from Tshombe's Katanga army; the involvement of the CIA, whose 'Gray Ghosts' – (unmarked transport planes carrying loads of arms) flew from Lisbon via Sao Tome to Uli under cover of the charitable relief flights on the same route.

Ojukwu justified this, as everything else, by the alleged threat of 'genocide' and the overriding need for survival. This propaganda, brilliantly spread internationally by the American-owned 'Markpress' public-relations firm in Geneva, succeeded admirably in its objective. Whether Ojukwu himself and his immediate advisers believed it or not is beside the point – though his own activities and personal position as the son of Sir Odumegwu Ojukwu, millionaire director of Shell Oil (Nigeria) Co. give grounds for doubt. The point is that millions of honest people outside Nigeria believed it, including not only European Christians and socialists, but even such eminent African statesmen and patriots as Nyerere and Kaunda. And, more poignantly still, millions of Ibo believed it, sustained by memories of the dreadful pogroms of September 1966 in the North, when thousands of Ibos were massacred. (Estimates range from 5,000 to 30,000 – the latter being of course the 'Biafran' figure.) Yet there was no basis in fact for the charge of intended 'genocide.' Thousands of Ibo people were living unmolested under Federal rule – at least 30,000 in Lagos and nearly half a million in the Mid-West region. The Federal government, during the war, cared for 700,000 refugees from 'Biafra' and gave priority in employment to Ibos, a policy that is still being followed by the Federal government in its policy of amnesty and reinstatement of 'Biafran' officials in the civil service.

Many people deeply sympathised with the call for self-determination, a cause that will always arouse the support of socialists and democrats. No doubt the Ibo people have their legitimate aspirations, which will always receive the support of progressive forces everywhere, and these were made full use of by Gowon and his backers. But 'Biafra', including a minority of five million non-Ibos in its 12 million population, was not and could not be a satisfactory basis for the solution of the problem of self-determination. Nor does this problem constitute an absolute; it must be seen against the larger issue, that of Nigerian and African unity. Fragmentation of Nigeria could only benefit imperialism and set a bad, possibly infectious precedent for the Continent as a whole.

However it began – and controversy may continue for a long time about the causes – the brief months of 1970 made it clear that 'Biafra' could only be maintained at the cost of its being a bridgehead for the worst enemies of Africa: the fascist governments of Portugal and the Republic of South Africa; the CIA; West German and French imperialism.

Why were such facts not better known, particularly in the outside world? It is true that the mass media controlled by the imperialists (and that goes for the British as well, despite their sales of arms to Federal Nigeria) are not and never have been interested in presenting the case for a strong and united Nigeria. The Federal government had a uniformly bad press, radio and television in the West.

But the fact must be faced that the Federal authorities consistently hashed up their information services. The generals in charge of both state and army took the view that war was the business of soldiers, not civilians. The ban on political parties covered not only the discredited bourgeois and feudalist parties who bear such a heavy responsibility for Nigeria's tragic post-independence history, but also such a patriotic and unifying force as the Socialist Workers' and Farmers' Party. The handling of this war – like any modern war – as a purely military operation impeded a mobilisation of the people's resources, prolonged the fighting and damaged Nigeria's cause at home and abroad.

The lesson is even more relevant now the fighting is over. We fully support General Gowon's firm rebuff to Nixon, Wilson and other would-be 'saviours' who under the guise of a 'relief operation' which would have flooded the former battle areas with foreign dispensers of charity, would have destroyed Nigeria's only hope of healing the wounds of fratricidal war, and building a progressive and united country.

That hope consists in the repairing of the physical and psychological damage by the fraternal Nigerian people themselves, and dispelling forever the myths and fears of tribal or ethnic fear and hatred. Thus alone can the ghost of 'genocide be laid.

Such a path cannot be followed on orders from above, nor can it be the work of military men alone, however honest, patriotic and magnanimous they may be. Diallo Telli, secretary-general of the O.A.U. has called the end of the Nigerian civil war 'a great victory for Africa.'

Certainly, despite its tragedies, the long fight for Nigerian unity has opened up the way for great advances for the people of this key independent African state. At home the people are more united; abroad they have found and recognised, in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, firm friends whose powerful aid, in time of need, preserved the integrity of the motherland, and whose continuing support can provide invaluable assistance in the major tasks that lie ahead – economic construction and development, raising of the masses' living and educational standards, breaking the shackles of imperialism.

Only the accomplishment of these great tasks, together with just attention to the aspirations and needs of each region, can make this occasion a true victory for the people in the fullest sense of the word.

For this, the fullest mobilisation of the masses themselves is required; the building of a people's democracy in which the working people themselves participate and play the foremost part at every level of state, economic and political administration.

EPHEMERAL 'REPUBLIC'

This year's outstanding non-event, the proclamation of the so-called 'Republic of Rhodesia', set up what we confidently predict will be among the shortest-lived states of all time. Even as the pirate flag was being hoisted in Salisbury the brave guerillas of the Zimbabwe African People's Union were sealing its doom in a new round of revolutionary battles.

It is an absurd presumption for Smith, representing a handful of whites, to claim the right to set up an African state named after his piratical predecessor and idol Cecil Rhodes. The whole world knows that but for the troops, weapons and economic backing of the fascists in Pretoria this monstrosity of a 'state' would long have collapsed – in other words that the 'Republic of Rhodesia' is nothing but a puppet of the Republic of South Africa.

Those countries which persist in affording any sort of recognition to this regime are announcing themselves as the enemies of Africa. After March 10, when the U.S. reluctantly closed its Consulate a number of countries retained representation in Salisbury.

It is in this context that we must look at the recent uninvited advice of President Nixon that the Africans of the South should achieve their aims by peaceful means. His own devotion to 'peaceful solutions' is manifested by the continuation of America's incredibly brutal intervention in Vietnam and Laos.

The truth is that, despite Nixon's pious and hypocritical condemnation of apartheid, U.S. imperialism does not want to see the end of apartheid, Portuguese colonialism or the upstart Smith regime. It regards the present set-up as a profitable going concern and as a part of the global strategy masterminded by the CIA.

There are no peaceful solutions possible in Southern Africa. The racists have given ample evidence of their intentions to maintain their evil regimes to the bitter end. They are impervious to appeals and condemnations as the history of the past two decades has amply demonstrated. Smith's 'Republic' will fall not under verbal assaults nor phony sanctions, but under the hammer-blows of the armed and fighting people of Zimbabwe.

SACTU: FIFTEEN YEARS

March 5 marked the fifteenth anniversary of the South African Congress of Trade Unions, the first and only non-racial industrial organisation of the South African working class.

Its foundation was preceded by a shameful betrayal. The bureaucracy heading the former Trades and Labour Council had decided to dissolve that body, for with all its failings (it was always dominated by the white aristocracy of labour) its constitution contained no colour bar. Instead, accommodating themselves to the anti-working class principles of apartheid, they set up the Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA) with a constitution explicitly barring Africans – the most exploited and the majority of the workers – from affiliation.

The true trade unionists refused to accept this sell-out. Many of the non-white trade unionists and, to their credit, some of the whites as well, came together to establish SACTU

Born in storm, SACTU's history has been a stormy one ever since.

For the first time ever a national trade union federation set out to organise the millions of African semi-slaves of industry and agriculture, around the rousing slogan '£1 a Day!' For the first time such a trade union body threw out the bad slogan 'no politics' (as if South Africa's black workers, barred from collective bargaining or even striking, hounded by pass laws and denied citizen rights, could possibly forget 'politics'.) SACTU allied itself boldly with the African National Congress and adopted the Freedom Charter as its own programme.

The racialists who rule South Africa could not tolerate such a militant, non-racial workers' organisation. They did not resort to an outright declaration of illegality, as they had done to the Communist Party in 1950 and the ANC in 1960. But they hounded SACTU in every possible way, making its public functioning virtually impossible. Every known official was served with a banning order forbidding him or her to participate in trade union activity. Hundreds of SACTU leaders were arrested and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment – SACTU President Steven Dhlamini is still serving such a sentence. Some were even executed, such as the heroic Port Elizabeth dockers' leader, Vuyisile Mini.

'TUCSA' has followed the miserable path of betrayal to this very day. Its leaders have sunk to ever lower depths of racialism, and even tour the western world as apologists for the fascist apartheid regime, gaining an access to trade union circles which would be denied to an open spokesman for the Vorster government.

But SACTU has continued its path of revolutionary struggle and sacrifice as the true spokesman of the millions of South Africa's oppressed and cruelly exploited workers.

The torch it lit in 1955 will never be extinguished.

THE COLOURED PEOPLE

Some sharply controversial issues have been raised in the past two issues of this journal. In our issue No. 39 two contributors, P. Mthikrakra and S. Dlondlayo vigorously criticised certain views advanced on 'The Coloured People of South Africa' by W.A. Malgas (African Communist No. 34.) In our last issue we published a brief reply by the original author. We do not think this can be regarded as a private argument. The issues raised are of far-reaching importance to the entire liberation movement.

We question the labelling of Malgas's position as that of a 'bourgeois nationalist' as unjustified by his article and inappropriate.

His critics, however, validly draw attention to the contrast between our contributor's views and the positions of the Communist Party and the Coloured People's Congress. Malgas, they say, belittles the specifically **national** aspect of the Coloured people's struggle and thus their alliance with the rest of South Africa's oppressed non-whites. Two brief extracts, one from the Programme of the South African Communist Party, the other from W.A. Malgas's reply, make this difference clear.

> *The Coloured and Malay people .... are a national group comprising workers, farm labourers, professional people and small businessmen.* (The Road to South African Freedom.)

> *The Coloured people are essentially part of the English and Afrikaans working class.* (Malgas.)

It seems to us that there is no reconciling these two basically conflicting assessments. The Programme considers the Coloured people to be a **national group**, comprising various classes and strata. To Malgas they are 'part of a class' – the white working class. What about the petty bourgeoisie – no inconsiderable section of the Coloured population? And why the **white** working class? Are the Coloured workers not just as much – or even more – part of the **non-white working class**, with whom they share the disabilities of job as well as national discrimination.

Malgas bases himself to some extent upon a speculation about the possible 'fusion' of the Coloured and White communities after the democratic revolution. One cannot, of course, dogmatise about the future. But surely that future will be and is being moulded in the fires of the present, of the national-democratic revolution itself. And at present the whole trend of Coloured opinion is away from the concept of 'fusion' with the white community, whose main contribution to Coloured society has been 300 years of oppression and rejection, and towards closer identification with the African and Indian peoples, their allies in the fight for freedom. Comrade Malgas makes much of such factors as the Coloured's sharing of common languages and religious beliefs with the whites. It is instructive here, perhaps, to look at the position in the United States, where those of mixed ancestry after generations of vainly seeking integration with white oppression are increasingly identifying themselves with Black Afro-Americans. Comrade Malgas's imagination, if projected into the future free South Africa, will no doubt see the likelihood of a new upsurge and efflorescence of long-suppressed African national and cultural aspirations. Many Coloured people, one might think, in that environment would be proud to identify with that not inconsiderable element in their ancestry which some have been brainwashed into hiding or repudiating.

But the Coloured national group have a vulnerable and rich heritage of their own. The task of the Coloured revolutionary today is, in line with the militant policy of the Coloured People's Congress, to unite and arouse his people in the fight, side by side with the oppressed African and Indian people, against white minority rule and for national liberation. To this end he will strive, surely, to fill his people with wrathful contempt for the oppressors, their arrogant and hateful 'theories' of racial superiority, and all their works. With legitimate pride in the best traditions of his own people: the slave revolts; their mutiny in the wars against the Xhosa into which they were conscripted; the heroic fight of Adam Kok and others for independence and self-determination. And with respect and love for the great majority of South Africans – their African kinsfolk. Let us not forget that when the pioneer Coloured democrats began long ago to build their own independent organisation, they deliberately chose the name:

African People's Organisation.

This is not an academic debate. We are not only spectators of history; we are participants in its making. What Coloured and other South African revolutionaries are thinking and doing at this time will ultimately shape the destiny of the Coloured people in the liberated South Africa of tomorrow.

RAISING THE STANDARD

Reviewing Rosalynde Ainslie's important book *The Press in Africa* our reviewer (No.28, First Quarter 1967) pointed out that 'one of the most astonishing features of independent and free Africa is the manner in which hostile, imperialist-controlled press has been allowed to continue functioning with relatively little interference.' This was 'a challenge to Africa.'

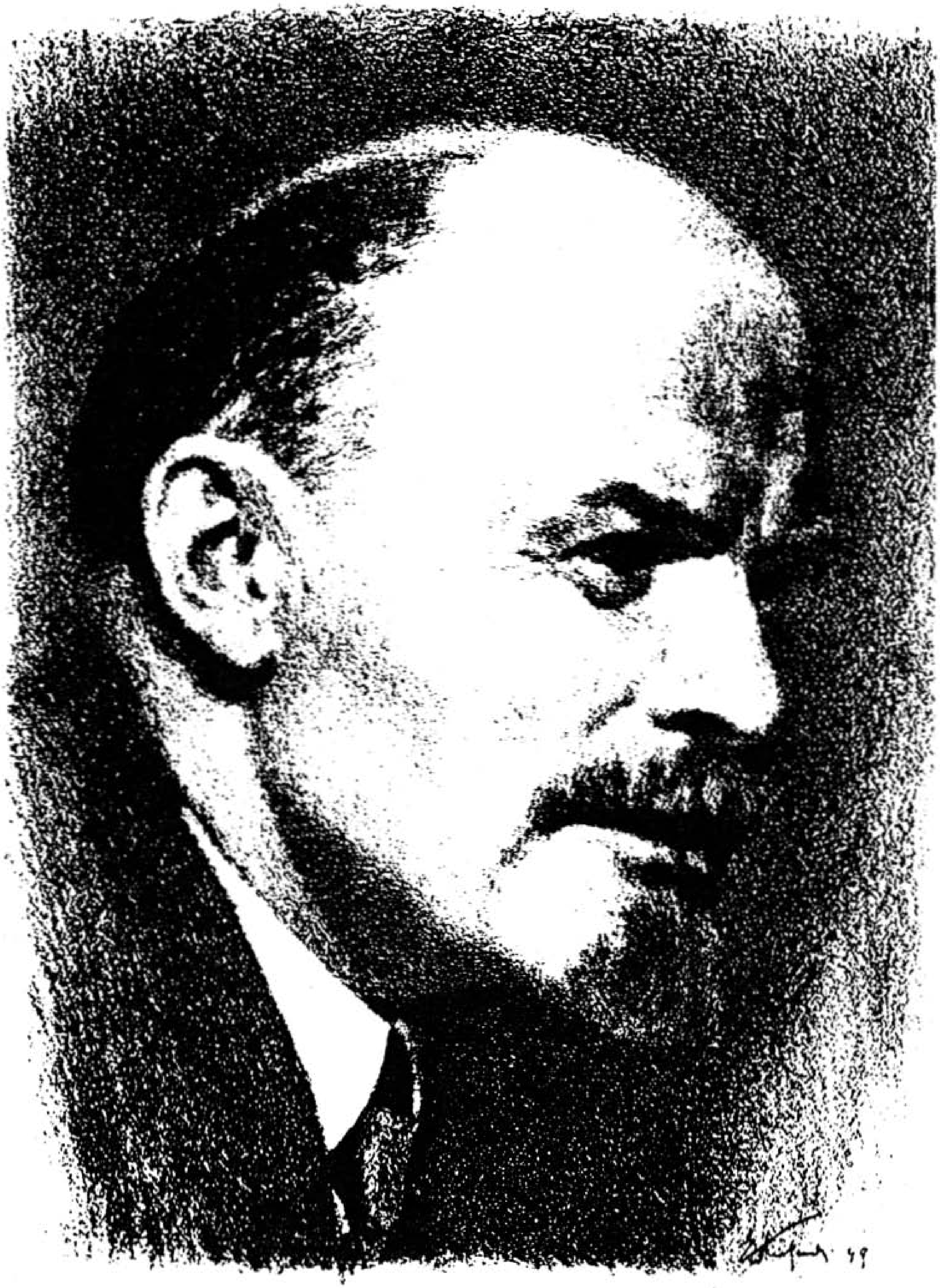
An important step to meet this challenge has been taken by President Nyerere and the TANU government of Tanzania by their action in nationalising the main Dar Es Salaam daily, *The Standard* and its counterpart, *The Sunday News.*

In his Charter for the new *Standard* the President declared that it would give its support to the socialist policies of TANU and the government, but would also be encouraged to speak out as an independent and critical voice of the people.

This declaration was backed up by the appointment, as Managing Editor of both papers, of Miss Frene N. Ginwala, long known as a fearless member of the South African Indian Congress and a talented journalist whose review *Spearhead* pioneered socialist writing in Tanzania before independence. She becomes the first woman Editor of a daily newspaper in Africa.

The papers have rapidly responded to the new direction, showing a splendid crusading spirit to which its readers have warmly responded.

Once again Tanzania has set an example which all African states could well emulate.



PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS OF LENIN

S. P. Bunting

I only saw or heard Lenin once, and that was at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International at Moscow in November, 1922. Before that indeed I had been quite elated on hearing that a paper I had written on 'Colonial Questions' for the *Nouvel Orient* magazine had been read by Lenin who would probably ask me to come and have a talk with him on the subject; but owing no doubt to the greater claim of other matters on his limited time and strength (for he was then also in a poor way) the interview, of course to my great disappointment, never came off. But he kept his appointment to address Congress (although even then he spoke with difficulty and retired immediately he had finished without waiting for the debate), and I wormed my way up as close as I could, both in order to have a good look at him and to follow as best I could his speech, which was in German–and even he had an interpreter by him to assist when he got stuck for a word.

One notices at once that no photographs truly represent him. Some of them of course are deliberate caricatures, intended to suggest the black-haired plotter of devilish atrocities and terrorism, with horns almost visibly growing from his head. But even the others fail to produce the true impression. Not that the shape or features of his light complexioned face are in themselves especially admirable; but no picture can reproduce their extreme mobility and vivacity, the rapid twinkling eyes glancing here and there as if to miss nothing, the live, humorous, sometimes quizzical turns of his expression, and with all the look of great confidence and sagacity.

Whatever he might have been in his prime, he was no orator on that occasion. Rather he seemed on the side of those who consider rhetoric the meretricious side of propaganda. The chief impression he gave was that every word he said was true, correct, sound, neither exaggerated nor understated, not designed to excite either undue elation or groundless fear, but something you could bank on and, recognising its fulfilment in after years, say 'Did he not say so at the Fourth Congress?' Not that he was a mere lecturer. Woe to him on whom Lenin's big guns were turned, we were told by those who had been worsted or rather silenced by him in debate in previous years. When he has spoken, the last word had been said. His faith was great because it was based on, and coincided with, his almost unerring judgment. The ignorant boureoisie regard Social revolutions as the product of some evil plot, of the 'black art' of some 'sinister' 'agitator', and the mean and frivolous obituary notices of Lenin in the capitalist press still reflect this superstitiousness. But the class-conscious workers of the world know already, and the rest will not be long now in finding out, both how profound is their loss, and the loss to the world, with the passing of that leader last Monday, and at the same time how completely he himself was the product as well as the producer of a revolution which is scientifically inevitable, which demands and will produce again the same qualities of judgment, daring, hard work and self-sacrifice not only on the part of a rare leader but of thousands and millions of the rank and file toilers of all lands, races and colours, until victory is won.

More than most, then, Lenin is immortal: he continues to lead the working class to victory after his death. It used to be predicted that he and his colleagues would corrupt the revolution into a Napoleonic tyranny; but that was the prediction of people who did not understand the difference between bourgeoisie and workers—exploiters and exploited. With the workers' final victory class domination (of which personal tyranny is only an instrument) comes to an end, and individual leaders can gradually be spared just as in the end the State itself will fall away in favour of the Workers' Commonwealth.

The International (Johannesburg)
25 January, 1924

**INTERNATIONAL MEETING
OF
COMMUNIST WORKERS' PARTIES
MOSCOW1969**

This handsome edition from Peace and Socialism Publishers, Prague contains all the official documents of the historic Moscow Conference together with the texts of all the speeches of the heads of delegations.

Clothbound: 670 pages *Post free: 20s.*

INKULULEKO PUBLICATIONS
39 Goodge Street
London W.1.

THE "NEW REVOLUTION" IN THE U.A.R.

G. Mirsky

In recent months the 'new revolution' has evoked widespread comment in the UAR. Some link its commencement with the events that ran high during and after the Israeli aggression in June 1967, others with the 'March 30 Programme', proclaimed by President Nasser on that very day in his statement over the radio. There is, in any case, unanimity of opinion that Egyptian society has entered a new stage of development. To understand the content of that stage we have to review the preceding stage, which was ushered in by the 'second revolution' of 1961.

I

The Egyptian revolution of July 23, 1952 had an anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, national-liberation character. By the beginning of the latter half of the 20th century the prerequisites for the revolution had fully matured but there was no political organisation capable of heading it: the bourgeois parties had corrupted and discredited themselves by their links with the 'Pasha regime'; the proletariat was weak and scattered. Only the army, or to be more exact the secret organisation of officers, was able to assume leadership and organise the overthrow of the feudal monarchy. The revolutionary military government immediately realised that it was impossible to preserve the old political structure, the key elements of which reflected the interests of the big landowners and of financial and industrial circles, who would inevitably try to destroy all the achievements of the revolution. A military regime was established on a reliable but narrow basis—the army.This has had an important bearing on the development of the Egyptian revolution to this day.

The actions taken by the imperialists to counter the new Egypt's independent foreign policy, the setting up of the openly anti-Egyptian Baghdad Pact, Dulles's blackmail in connection with the Aswan Dam project, made the military government adopt a more radical anti-imperialist stand, which it probably initially did not intend to do. Washington's die-hard policy acted, as it were, as a catalyst for the chain of events that led to the nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company in 1956, and later to the Egyptianisation of all foreign property. At that time there were no socialist trends whatever in the Egyptian leadership, it only reacted to the pressure and dictates of the imperialists in keeping with its comprehension of the national interests and national dignity of the Egyptian people. The regime continued to be a strictly nationalist one and had a very vague socio-economic programme which was of a pronounced anti-feudal character (it is not without reason that the only major social transformation carried out after the 1952 revolution was the land reform) but clearly intended to use private capital as the principal instrument for the industrialisation of the country. Accelerated industrialisation was the sole way in which the country could force its way out of the extremely difficult economic and social situation. Suffice it to say that 37 per cent of the urban population had no definite occupation, that the towns were full of people who had left the country to escape starvation and who depended on odd jobs.[1] *The

---

* See footnotes at end of article

population increased by 800,000 a year.

The military leaders understood the seriousness of the position and granted many concessions to private capital to channel it to industry, but in the final analysis this brought nothing but disappointment to them. The growth of industrial output was far too slow, the sum total of investments in industry dropped from £E26.2 million in 1956 to £E12.9 million in 1957. The Egyptian scholar A.Abdel-Malek explains this by 'the enormous fear the possessing classes felt at the time of Suez'.[2]

Why fear? Although the nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company, that is the freeing of the economy from the dominance of foreign capital, was in the economic interests of the Egyptan bourgeoisie, in the socio-psychological aspect, it seems the wave of the nationalisation in 1956-1957 became responsible for the conflict between the military regime and the national bourgeoisie. In fact, it was decisive in making the UAR embark on the road of non-capitalist development.

Confidence in the state power is a factor exerting enormous influence on the activity of private capital. Purely economic and financial benefits do not guarantee the active operation of the private sector if it does not feel secure in the future. Private capital is indissolubly linked with the market and every capital investment is a risk. No economic benefits, let alone patriotic slogans, will prompt the capitalist to invest if he feels that the risk exceeds the 'optimally permissible' degree. When the Egyptian capitalists saw how easily and calmly Nasser's government nationalised foreign property, they got scared. They would have felt no fear if there were their own people in the government but the military regime preserved its monopoly of power; though giving the capitalists economic privileges, it refused to let them participate in the business of government. 'Merchants and industrialists were no longer consulted about the regime's plans for economic development .... Thus although the economic climate became more favourable, government policy engendered insecurity in the business community.'[3] Foreign capitalists trusted the revolutionary government even less, although they too were granted considerable privileges after the revolution. J. and S. Lacouture note that 'foreign capital was reticent even before the Suez Canal Company was nationalised . . . . . Western capitalism was wary of having dealings with the regime of colonels.[4]

Contrary to all expectations the land reform did not promote the flow of capital to industry. In 1955, for example, £E45 million were freed in the agricultural sphere but only 6 million settled in industry.[5] Business people invested capital mainly in housing construction: in 1956 these investments reached 75.8 per cent of the total private investments.[6] Nothing changed in subsequent years: in 1958 over 75 per cent of the total private investments went to housing construction. In economically backward countries housing construction brings far greater profits than industry. Besides, expecting that the government would sooner or later expropriate foreign property and also try to encroach upon the privileges of the local possessing classes, Egyptian businessmen decided to make hay while the sun was still shining. This made them invest money in fields where they could gain maximum returns in minimum time.

The businessmen wasted currency, remitted millions of pounds to Western capitals, and by 1959-1960 this drainage became an extremely acute problem. Private companies secretly established spheres of influence so as not to interfere with each other in obtaining government tenders at the most profitable price and made agreements on the rate of profit transactions which state companies were to yield. They resorted to all sorts of shady deals. The bougeoisie flourished, grew rich and its increasing economic power was in sharp contrast with its negligible say in politics, in deciding the fate of the country. As a result it was likely that anti-government plots would be hatched since a breeding ground for opposition had emerged. The government understood that it had set itself an impossible task, that of developing national capital to modernise and industrialise the country, without giving it political control. It became obvious that if there is a powerful class of private owners in the country it cannot be kept from politics, from participation in the solution of national problems. This was subsequently proved by the events in Syria and Burma.

The actions of the Egyptian bourgeoisie were incompatible with the national development aims the military government wanted to achieve. As the revolutionary leaders saw it, they either had to carry out industrialisation and bring about a steep upsurge of the national income or else admit bankruptcy. This is how the leaders of the revolutionary regime put it. The bourgeoisie was in its way and therefore had to be pushed aside. There were no moral or economic obstacles to stop the people in power from doing this–since they were of petty-bourgeois class origin and had no links with the big bourgeoisie.

The government's onslaught on the positions of big capital began in February 1960 with the nationalisation of the Misr Bank, the citadel of the Egyptian bourgeoisie. **Al Ahram** wrote that the Misr Bank had reached the monopoly stage, and this threatened that it would 'impose its supremacy on the state power'.[7] This constitutes the essence of the problem. The big bourgeoisie was so strong economically that it would inevitably attempt to seize control of the government. The government struck a preventive blow. Starting with the Misr Bank, Nasser's government then nationalised all banks and insurance companies, 44 industrial and other companies (July 1961), foreign trade, the merchant fleet, etc. These measures, which were officially proclaimed as 'socialist decrees' ushered in the 'second revolution'.

Similar to the way in which a few years earlier the big

landowner elite and their political representatives—the politicians of the old epoch—had been removed from the political arena, in 1961 came the turn of the bourgeoisie. Property to the value of £E1,000 million was expropriated. The bourgeois elite was branded 'enemies of the people' and was 'isolated', i.e., deprived of political rights.

Khaled Mohei el-Din, a prominent Egyptian progressive wrote: 'Thus President Nasser became convinced both from the practical and theoretical points of view that it was not possible to follow the capitalist path and that the development plan could be carried out only through a socialist solution.'[8] A theory was required to substantiate the road taken by the revolution. The revolution had really entered the stage where it was looking for a theory. Egypt is an interesting example of such a revolution in which practice outstrips theory. The leadership felt the need for a theoretical substantiation of its actions after it had taken the decisive step.

Since these actions were aimed against the exploiter classes which was obstructing the revolution, against the bourgeoisie and landowners, there could be only one theoretical basis for this policy—socialism. The Arab Socialist Union, a mass organisation, was set up. No less than 50 per cent of its electoral bodies were to be comprised of peasants and workers. The National Congress of the Popular Forces called in the summer of 1962 approved the Charter of National Action, which proclaimed that it was 'historically necessary' to overcome Egypt's economic and social backwardness along socialist lines.

II

The Charter of National Action was a revolutionary democratic programme, underpinning the set of anti-capitalist measures with a theoretical basis.

The traditional exploiter classes—the landowners and the bourgeoisie—lost political influence and were ousted from their economic positions. This did not mean, however, that these classes had been liquidated, that exploitation of man by man had been abolished and socialist relations of production had been established in the country.

About 60 per cent of the UAR's able-bodied population is engaged in agriculture. Hence, the development of the revolution depends to a high degree on the alignment of forces in rural areas. What was the state of affairs after the second land reform, which decreased the maximum holding from 200 feddans (according to the 1952 law) to 100 feddans (about 40 hectares)? In 1964 small owners (having less than 5 feddans) accounted for 94.1 per cent of all owners and held 52.1 per cent of the land; the corresponding figures for medium owners (5-50 feddans), 0.4 and 15.2 per cent. Very rich owners had disappeared completely[9] The number of well-to-do owners (20-50 feddans) grew in twelve years from 22,000 to 29,000.[10] According to other data medium holdings (from 10 to 25 feddans) grew most rapidly. The journal *Al-Tali'a* organ of the Arab Socialist Union, called them kulaks. On the whole, it can be said that the countryside is now the main breeding ground of Egyptian capitalism. The medium peasants, who undoubtedly profited from the agrarian reform, are a private-capitalist element in the country.

The 11,000 landowners and the tens of thousands of peasants who continued to exist after the second land reform controlled the Egyptian countryside. The village elders and many policemen were subordinated to them. The exploitation of the tenants continued, they were oppressed by all sorts of unlawful methods. According to an investigation made by the Cairo weekly *Rose el Yussef*, rich peasants dominated the cooperatives (formed on the land expropriated from big landowners) usurers flourished.[11] H. Issa described a rich family among the members of which there were the village elder, his assistant, his four deputies, the head of the Police, the secretary of the local committee of the Arab Socialist Union, his deputy and 18 committee members (of the toal of 22), the secretary and 10 members of the rural council, the chairman and secretary of the cooperative.[12] This, of course, is an exceptional case, but it should be noted that the law which recognised all those owning less than 25 feddans as peasants, enabled rich owners, kulaks and even landlords to seize key positions in the countryside.

There were cases when landlords paid the agricultural workers only 1 piastre, instead of the 25 piastres stipulated by law. By means of various machinations they kept much more land than they were allowed to (there were families who owned 500 and even 2,000 feddans). Documents were forged, men of straw were used, etc. In some places the omdas (village elders) and sheikhs administered justice and meted out punishment to the peasants as in the old days.[13]

This class began to link up with the 'new bourgeoisie' in towns–the 'new class', recently much discussed by the Egyptian press. Khaled Mohei el-Din explains 'the emergence of new social groups of contractors, suppliers of commodities, etc.', by the 'inability of the public sector sometimes to meet their requirements or to find the needed specialists or managers'. Speaking of bribery and of the inflated prices of agricultural products, Khaled Mohei el-Din admitted that 'favourable conditions are ripe for the emergence of excessively rich groups in both town and country'.[14]

The objective basis for the emergence of the new privileged stratum was the unique nature of the country's development during the past decade: the rapid industrialisation and the enormous growth of the state sector, on the one hand, and the presence of channels for private capitalist accumulation, on the other. The UAR became an agrarian-industrial country: industry now produces 50 per cent of the national income. In five years 750,000 new jobs were created in industry. The service sector grew extensively, housing construction made rapid headway. By 1963 the number of persons employed in the state apparatus reached 1.2 million.[15] A stratum called the 'tabakat al-mudirin' (the managerial class) was formed. The salaries of these managers were cut repeatedly but they still receive up to £E 3,000 a year; after the payment of taxes the managers draw £E 1,000 a year. Since industrial enterprise has been stopped, the money is spent on the purchase of consumer goods, notably of consumer durables, and shortages of these goods lead to 'cosumption fever', speculation, etc. On the other hand, 'many state employees lend money to private persons, notably to building contractors having difficulty in obtaining money from the state, charging an enormous interest'[16]—from 50 to 60 per cent per annum. Many officials buy land in suburban areas, plant orchards, cultivate kitchen gardens, etc. A US writer reported that there were huge amounts of 'hidden money' in Egypt notwithstanding the efforts of the government to channel it into 'socially profitable' fields. And as it became more difficult to transfer money abroad, privately owned Egyptian capital was invested in large housing construction—both state and private buildings.[17]

According to Nasser, private contractors handled 60 per cent of all the construction in the country, and wholesalers earned thousands of pounds a day. This was not the old, 'traditional' bourgeoisie, which had lost its factories after 1961. These nouveaux riches, capitalising on the 'consumption and construction fever', the weakness and low level of profitability of some state enterprises, profited by distributing the output of state enterprises. By making contacts or even coalescing with a part of the highly paid officials and the growing rural bourgeoisie these people formed the nucleus of the new privileged stratum, leading a parasitical 'dolce vita' that evoked the dissatisfaction of the impoverished mass of the population.

Naturally, this stratum viewed the prospect of socialist construction in the UAR with extreme disfavour, an attitude echoed by the powerful Egyptian bureaucrats.

As regards its nature, the 1952 revolution was a deep-going anti-imperialist, national-democratic revolution, and as regards its form, a military coup d'etat. At the time of the revolution there was nobody the Free Officers could rely upon except the army. In later years too they could not find real mass support, were unable to release the creative energy of the people, and the military regime therefore had to carry out all its revolutionary measures with the old bureaucratic apparatus. The personnel in direct charge of these measures were essentially the same who had run the apparatus before the revolution.

A new generation of civil servants, who would not take a bourgeois view of life and would break with the traditional red tape had to be educated and the broad participation and initiative of the people had to be ensured to bring about a radical renewal of the apparatus. But, there was nobody to make efforts in that direction since there was no progressive party, no socialist vanguard of society. Muhammed Oda, an Egyptian journalist, wrote in the **Al-Gumhuria** that political and ideological work was completely neglected. Administration was the principal method. The state acted on behalf of the masses but without them.

It was not only that people of the 'old regime' kept some of the positions. As time went by, civil servants of the pre-revolutionary regime were replaced but, unfortunately, the new bureaucrats differed from the old mainly in age. The remarkable ability to reproduce itself, that is typical of any bureaucracy, manifested itself with special force in Egypt. Most observers agree that the Egyptian bureaucracy is inefficient, sluggish, and presumptuous: that it has inherited the worst traits of the former pashas and effendis-contempt for the simple people, egoism and money-grabbing. The bureaucratism and red tape in Egyptian institutions have become proverbial. President Nasser himself said: 'Sometimes one has to sign 20 forms to obtain permission for something.' He mentioned a case when expensive equipment for a hospital was not used because nobody had the right to authorise the expenditure of a small sum of money necessary to install it.

Socially, these people were much closer to the 'new bourgeoisie' than to the working people. They hate genuine socialism and, of course, the Marxists, the bearers of the genuine socialist ideology. When the communists were released from gaol the conservative bourgeois bureaucracy was indignant about it: The reactionary civil servants, including the police, sabotaged the President's policy towards the Left forces, endeavoured to stop Marxists from participating in social life.

'The government apparatus', Nasser admitted, 'is not developed sufficiently to serve society. It still considers that it stands above the people, it wields power and does not want to recognise that it must be a servant of the masses.[19]

The military bureaucracy was a constituant part of that government apparatus. 'The officers', Meyer-Ranke wrote:-

> *top the social pyramid. They form the personnel and the elite. They are directors in the economic apparatus, govern the Suez Canal and manage the developing of the desert. The governors of all 24 provinces are officers of the army or the police, 90 per cent of the ambassadors come from the officer corps. Naturally, holding civilian posts they do not wear uniforms but it is they who form the modern military caste . . . They have more influence and privileges than the rest of the Egyptian population. Officers are not allowed to use the public transport so that they should not be pushed around in uniform in crowded buses. Army transport facilities are at their*

> *service . . . They have their clubs in Cairo and Alexandria. They are paid better than other Egyptians holding identical jobs. A lieutenant draws 25 to 30 pounds a month, while a young man with a university diploma starting in a government institution earns no more than 18 pounds.*[20]

The military received five times higher wages abroad than they did at home, at home they got a special high cost of living allowance, which was not drawn by civilians. Cooperative 'townships' were built for officers. They could also buy household articles at 30 per cent of the price.[21]

Since Egypt's military leaders had come to power with the help of the army whose importance was clear to them, and since there was no strong mass political organisation on whose support they could rely, they kept intact the privileges the monarchy had granted to officers, and even multiplied them, wishing to keep the army as their main support. But being determines consciousness and privileges promote a change in the psychological make-up. Many young revolutionary officers gradually turned into bourgeois bureaucrats, became members of the privileged militaristic corporation, bought villas and opened current accounts in banks, including also foreign banks. As the social motives of the revolution grew more pronounced these people began to express dissatisfaction. According to Belyayev and Primakov, two Soviet authors, army pilots (generally the children of more or less well-to-do and privileged families) openly protested in 1961, when Nasser published his 'socialist decrees', against the admission of 'radish and lettuce vendors' to the National Assembly.

From time to time, the ranks of the officers were renewed but the bureaucratisation and bourgeosification process outstripped the renewal. Some leaders apparently thought that the deeper the social reforms made by the government, the more it must reckon with the possible opposition of the higher officers, and the greater must be the privileges granted to them to preserve their loyalty. As a result of this vicious circle, some high officers, who did not approve of the revolution and saw in its reforms a threat to their privileged position, awaited a propitious moment to rise against the leadership, which the military bureaucratic bourgeoisie thought had moved too far to the Left.

There was no political work in the army, no groups of the Arab Socialist Union, and members of the armed forces could not become members of the party. The conservative officers hated the very idea of setting up a party of the socialist vanguard (about which government leaders had frequently spoken in recent years).

According to Heikal, the Chief Editor of *Al Ahram*, the centres of power and state control served and guarded their own narrow interests, and mass movement developed not owing to them, but in spite of them.[22] In another article Heikal wrote about the 'power grouping', which 'fully controlled the administration'. These terms 'power centres' and 'power groupings' and also 'pressure groupings' were not used in the UAR right up to the six-day war. They were mentioned only after these groupings had been routed following the events in June 1967. It turned out these 'centres' and 'groups' had been all-powerful. Some Egyptian authors even wrote that up to June 1967 there had been 'dual power' in the UAR.[23] The 'second power' or 'parallel centre of power', as the Egyptian press called it, was headed by Marshal Amer. His staff, the military intelligence and the state security bodies were the 'pressure groupings' which strove to control the President's actions.

At the trial of the conspirators in the spring of 1968 former War Minister Badran said that when President Nasser in 1962 wanted to curtail Amer's right to take personal decisions on the appointment of army personnel the latter threatened to resign. The 'double power' continued. General Sherid said in court that during the June events he had heard Badran tell Nasser over the telephone that he was strong enough to carry out a coup, if necessary, 'without getting up from his chair'.[24]

'There were many who wanted if not a military defeat then at least a telling failure to compel the rais (i.e., Nasser) to retire, Rouleaut, the *Le Monde* correspondent, wrote in connection with the June events.[25] Issa writes that

> *During the six day war the 'new class' opposed Nasser and its representatives got together in the lobbies in Cairo to form a new government. Lists of the new government had been drawn up long ago. To all intents and purposes the party had ceased to exist, its apparatus had been paralysed. But there were the people. Millions of these people, about whose inertness and lack of interest in politics so much had been said, thronged the streets and demanded a say . . . The movement of June 9 and 10 was a movement of the opposition to the new class and its system. This growing movement will give birth to the long hoped for party. Its leader has already been elected by the masses. He is Nasser.*[26]

The military elite was ousted from the commanding positions, but the military bureaucratic bourgeoisie which had only been wounded started a counter-attack. This is how Amer's plot was hatched, in which Badran and Salakh Nasr, the former head of military intelligence played the key role. The plot was foiled and President Nasser said: 'Allah be thanked, the armed forces are now where they should be.'

Speaking in March 1968 in Helwan, Nasser said: 'There was a group of military politicians . . . For them the revolution meant power . . . After the people rose on June 9 and 10 this class felt threatened and began to think of seizing the command.' In his previous speech the President also stressed that 'there was a class of officers, who considered themselves the natural heirs of the regime', thought that it was their mission to decide the fate of the country and the revolution.[27]

The military bureaucratic bourgeoisie Nasser spoke of is not a class in the Marxist sense of the word but only a stratum, a constituent part of the new privileged layer that formed in Egypt after the 1952 revolution. The 'new revolution' is a struggle against that stratum, against the bourgeoisified civilian and military bureaucracy, which has to some degree fused with the private sector.

III

The decision of the Meeting of Representatives of the Communist and Workers' Parties of the Arab countries, held in July 1968, notes that 'the deep socio-economic changes in the Arab countries with progressive governments were not backed by corresponding political measures, which kept the masses, chiefly interested in these measures, and notably the working class, from active participation in political leadership and the control over production.'[28]

The most important of the 'corresponding political measures' referred to in the document is the union of all progressive forces genuinely interested in socialism, notably of the proletariat, in a vanguard political party. This is to be a mass party which is to provide genuine political and ideological guidance. Up to then there had been no such party in the UAR. The fact that the Arab Socialist Union was a mass party was unimportant in the absence of a vanguard closely knit with the people, one that would be constantly replenished by people's representatives and able to educate and lead the masses. Only recently the idea circulated in the UAR that it was advisable to set up a 'secret party' within the framework of the Arab Socialist Union. The names of the members of that 'party', or the 'political apparatus', as it was called, were to be kept secret to protect them from repressions by anti-socialist elements. The 'double power' we mentioned above gave birth to this idea. After the rout of the conservative military and police elite in 1967, the 'secret party' idea was naturally given up. The task now was to reorganise the ASU, to purge the conservative elements from its leadership. This was demanded by the people who realised in June 1967 that not only the lack of military preparations was responsible for the military defeat, as some wanted them to believe. The shortcomings of the system as a whole came in for sharp criticism.

Tadeusz Jackowski, a Polish journalist, wrote that this 'spontaneous criticism of the masses' was spearheaded against the 'powerful immobile pyramid of power, based on the army, intelligence and security service'.[29] The exposure of Amer's plot was only the beginning. By the end of 1967 the anti-socialist forces, having recovered from the confusion into which they had been thrown by the June events, when the people poured out into the streets with demand to keep Nasser in power and to continue his progressive policy, and then again after Amer's failure, now launched a counter-offensive. The Muslim Brothers, a prohibited but very active religious underground organisation accused the government of having renounced religion and having forgotten the ideals of Islam. Leaflets were circulated in January 1968 which said that the President had been subjugated by 'alien socialist forces'. It turned out that these leaflets were printed in the building of the State Security Ministry. When the inhabitants of two districts of the capital wanted to submit a petition to the President asking him to take measures against the reactionary bureaucracy, the anti-popular elements barred the delegates from the President's residence and did not inform him of the petition. Left functionaries were arrested, all meetings were banned. In this atmosphere, early in 1968, the conservative elements in the country's leadership launched an attack against the President and his policy. A struggle for power ensued. The attack of the Right was headed by Zacharia Mohei el-Din, the first Vice-President, who had been in charge of the arrests of communists when he was Minister for the Interior, and whom the bourgeois bureaucratic circles had wanted to become President in June 1967.

Zacharia Mohei el-Din's plan to 'clean up the economy' provided for a slow-down of industrialisation, the closure of non-profitable enterprises in the state sector, a cut in employment by 500,000 people, a rise in the prices of consumer goods, a cut in wages, a partial reorientation of foreign trade with a view to 'decreasing the dependence on the socialist countries', greater emphasis on 'cooperation' with foreign capital, attraction of capital from the International Monetary Fund and extensive privileges to the private sector. Essentially this was a plan to put an end to the socialist orientation of the UAR, to revive the activity of local and foreign capital. All difficulties being experienced by the Egyptian economy were to be shifted on to the shoulders of the people.

Zacharia Mohei el-Din and the 'technocrats', on behalf of whom he acted, knew that they were supported by the administrative and economic apparatus. But they underestimated the authority of the President, his ability and willingness to listen to the voice of the people. Economists holding Leftist views drew up a different, progressive economic development plan for the President.

The 'Helwan events' which took place at that time were of enormous importance for the outcome of the struggle for power, for the country's orientation, The workers of the iron and steel works in Helwan organised strikes and demonstrations protesting against the far too lenient sentences that had been passed on the participants in the 'military plot'. Actually, however, there was more to it. This was the first time the working class openly critisised the inert, reactionary apparatus of the 'new bourgeoisie'. There was no longer any doubt about the views of the working people. President Nasser arrived in Helwan, addressed tens of thousands of workers and told them that they were right. He censured those who were backing the reactionaries by advancing extremist slogans, supported the workers in their opposition to the privileged caste. After that Nasser told fellahs in Mansur that a social revolution was inconceivable without socialism and that it was necessary 'to rebuild our house, beginning from the bottom and not from the top'.

Seeing that he was supported by the people the President struck at the conservatives and 'technocrats'. Zacharia Mohei El-Din was dismissed from all government positions. His economic plan was rejected. The policy of industrialisation, of giving priority to the state sector, and of developing cooperation with the socialist countries was re-affirmed. 'The March 30 Programme' envisages an 'activisation of the people's forces on a democratic basis', a restructuring of the Arab Socialist Union and its transformation into the leading force of society. The referendum held on May 2, 1968 confirmed that the people were supporting the 'March 30 Programme'. The elections to the local and central bodies of the Arab Socialist Union held in the summer of 1968 which led to the convocation of the national Congress of the Arab Socialist Union in September and the elections to the Central Committee, further strengthened the socialist orientation of the Republic. A new charter was adopted by the ASU which was characterised as the socialist vanguard, leading the people.[30]

It was decided to consider as peasants only those owning no more than 10 feddans of land (4 hectares). The nationalisation of wholesale trade (three years earlier than originally planned) struck a blow at the big bourgeois stratum still remaining.

The aim of the **'new revolution' is to fight the new bureaucratic bourgeoisie, to release the initiative of the** masses, to make social life democratic and to create the material and spiritual prerequisites for a transition to the building of socialism. This struggle proceeds in extraordinarily difficult conditions: part of Egypt is occupied by Israel and the troops of the aggressor are stationed some 120 kilometres from Cairo. The Suez Canal is closed to shipping. Naturally the country's attention is now focussed on the liberation of the occupied territories. The principal national task is to abolish the aftermaths of the Israeli aggression and all efforts are directed towards that end. The leadership of the UAR desires a political settlement but the obstinate attitude of the aggressor compells it to prepare also for a possible military solution of the conflict. Although this tense situation obstructs the class struggle, no one can abolish it or postpone it to 'a later date'.

The 1952 revolution took place in a country which was a focus of all the weak points and contradictions of backward, semi-colonial society. It would be naive to expect the progressive social forces to triumph easily or quickly in such a country. The Egyptian people's social revolution is undergoing a complicated and contradictory development, but it seems that at this moment it is entering its most responsible phase.

1 See H. Riad, *L'Egypte Nasserienne*, Paris, 1964, pp 41, 60
2 A.Abdel-Malek, *L'Egypte, societe militaire*, Paris, 1962, p 103
3 P.O.'Brian, *The Revolution in Egypt's Economic System*, London, 1966, p314
Exactly the same thing happened in Syria after the advent to power of the Left Baathists
4 J. et S. Lacouture, *L'Egypte en mouvement*, Paris, 1966, p348
5 See A.Abdel-Malek, Op.cit., p81 6 Ibid 7 Quoted from A.Abdel-Malek, Op.cit,p.136
8 Khaled Mohei el-Din, 'Phases of the Egyptian Revolution'. *The African Communist* No27 p49
9 *Developpement et civilisation*, s, No.22, juin 1965
10 *Democratic novelle*, No.2, 1968, p101 11 *Rose el Yussef*, June 10 and 24, 1968
12 H.Issa, "Les nouveaux nantis', *Democratie nouvelle*, No.2, 1968, p.89
13 *L'Unita*, No.14, 1967 14 Khaled Mohei el-Din, Op.cit., p54
15 See *Times of India*, Sept.5, 1963 16 *Democratic nouvelle*, No.2, 1968 pp 93-94
17 See Ph.Dorn, 'Egypt's Paralyzed Revolution', *New Leader*, Jan.30, 1967
19 *Al Ahram*, March 27, 1964 20 P.Meyer-Ranke, *Der rote Pharao*, Hamburg, 1964, S.64
21 *Le role extra-militaire de l'Armee dans le Tiers monde*, Paris, 1966, p126
22 *UAR: Economist Intelligence Quarterly*, No.4, 1967, p5
23 H.Issa, Op.cit., *Democratic nouvelle*, No. 2, 1968, p96
24 *Le Monde*, Feb.28, 1968 25 Quoted from *Democratie nouvelle*, No.2, 1968, p.97
26 Ibid 27 *Polityka*, Feb 24, 1968 28 *Pravda*, Sept 26, 1968
29 *Zycie Warszawy*, Aug 4, 1968 30See*The Egyptian Gazette*, May 10, 1968

BACKGROUND TO THE COUP IN LESOTHO

Nxele

We would not be telling the truth if we said that the events which took place in Lesotho at the end of January came as a surprise. In a preview of the Lesotho General Elections which were scheduled for January 27th, the bulletin *Majammoho*, official organ of the Communist Party of Lesotho, in its November-December issue said:

> *The aim of the neo-colonial regime is not to conduct fair and democratic elections, but to provoke, terrorise and intimidate the masses, to rig the elections and create conditions for a despotic, terroristic rule.*

Then at a press conference on January 25th, held in Maseru, capital of the territory, Mr. Ntsu Mokhehle leader of the Basutoland Congress Party which was at the time official parliamentary opposition in the Lesotho Parliament had this to say:

> *Leabua has also gone all out to intimidate voters, in his rallies, through the radio, and through terrorism he perpetrated through the B.N.P. (Basutoland National Party*

> *youths. Some of these youths have undergone special courses of training in terrorism under the Nationalist Chinese (Formosa) instructors . . .*

But what is amazing is the shamelessness, the scandalous and disgraceful manner in which Chief Jonathan Leabua overrode and nullified the outcome of the elections in which his puppet regime was rejected convincingly by the electorate.

Before we go into the background of this sordid affair we should pay high tribute to the people of Lesotho who in face of extreme provocation retained their nerve and discipline and registered in an unmistakable fashion their rejection of policies of subservience to imperialism in general and South African imperialism in particular—policies which Leabua had foisted on the country.

Moreover, it should be made clear from the outset that Leabua Jonathan only managed to pull off the coup as a result of two factors—the collaboration of the British-officered police force within the country and the menacing activities of the South African police along the borders of the country. To back up its sabre-rattling activities, the South African Government ordered troops to occupy the South African broadcast stations as was the case in Durban. And the South African Broadcasting Corporation promptly gave its backing to the seizure of power by Leabua.

No one should swallow the tale that the Pretoria regime was 'embarrassed' by the Lesotho coup. Or rather they were embarrassed by reasons different from those some sections of the press are trying to sell to the world. We are being told that the South African regime respects legality—that South African civil servants attached to the Lesotho judiciary tried to advise against the seizure of power by Leabua—that church leaders tried to persuade the putschists to restore the constitution.

But Vorster was soon to dispel all illusions by declaring that his regime's policy vis-a-vis the Lesotho crisis was the same as South Africa's policies towards Rhodesia. In other words, he was ready to support an illegal despotism by armed intervention.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Lesotho is a small enclave entirely surrounded by the Republic of South Africa. Its present area is 11,720 square miles of which three quarters is mountainous region standing between 5,000 to 10,000 feet above sea level. Its population is round about one million.

The people of Lesotho pride themselves on the fact that they successfully repulsed invasion by the Boers during the middle of the last century. King Moshoeshoe I, the founder of the nation had built up impregnable military positions on his mountain stronghold of Thaba Bosigo and he backed up his military successes with skilful diplomacy. But as pressures from Anglo-Boer colonialists grew against him, the missionaries stepped in and persuaded the King to enter into a Treaty of Alliance and Protection with the British Government in 1868. The Treaty provided for 'protection' by Britain of Lesotho in the event of aggression by an outsider. In terms of the Treaty the King and the Pitso (Parliament) were to retain complete sovereignty over the territory but British colonialism reduced these sacred agreements to a mere farce. In the final analysis Lesotho became an ordinary colony and was dominated by Britain for a period of over eighty years. But that was not all that happened. Throughout the whole period of British 'Protection' Lesotho had to contend with the robbing of their land by the Boers and on numerous occasions attempts were made by South Africa to annex Lesotho and the two other protectorates of Swaziland and Botswana.

British imperialism, true to form, condemned Lesotho to a state of terrible underdevelopment. No industry worth the name was built and neither the land nor natural resources were developed. The upshot of all this was that Lesotho became a reservoir of cheap labour for South African industrial and mining activity. More than half of the menfolk of Lesotho in their prime of life are forced to go and sell their labour power at humiliating conditions and rates of pay in neighbouring South Africa.

The intention of Great Britain to keep Lesotho and the other protectorates in Southern Africa, within the orbit of South Africa can be seen from the administrative structure which the colonial power set up in the country. The top administrative official was the British High Commissioner to South Africa and his headquarters was in Pretoria. A section in the Act of Union under which Britain granted independence to White South Africa, made provision for the eventual transfer of the protectorates to South Africa. But it was the stubborn resistance of the Africans in these territories, particularly the struggle of the people of Lesotho, which frustrated the designs of racist South Africa against them.

LESOTHO AND SOUTH AFRICA

From 1856 until 1868 the Boers coming from the then Orange Free State Republic launched a series of aggressive wars against Lesotho as a result of which Lesotho lost a large portion of her lands—the so called 'Conquered Territory'.

Then in 1871 by the so-called Act of the Cape legislative assembly run by the English, Lesotho was annexed to the then Cape Colony. But the people of Lesotho resisted annexation and various disturbances occurred. And the reply of the Cape Government to these disturbances was to extend to Lesotho the provisions of the 'Peace Preservation Act' which included a clause calling for the general disarmament of the Basutho. The people of Lesotho refused to accept these arrogant and high-handed terms. War broke out, lasting nearly a year, at the end of which the Act was repealed by the Cape regime, which imposed fines on the people of Lesotho.

But the stubborn resistance of the Basutho continued unabated until the Cape Government in 1884 was obliged to hand over the administration of the territory to the Imperial Government.

As we have indicated, throughout the period under review, South Africa's threat to gobble up Lesotho and the other Protectorates remained persistent. But it suddenly surfaced sharply during the mid-fifties when the South African regime announced its blueprint for the so-called Bantustans in the form of the Tomlinson Commission report.

South Africa hoped to condemn Lesotho to a future of fraudulent 'self government' in the form of Bantunstans but the people of Lesotho had other ideas. They clung fast to the goal of freedom and independence.

When the granting of independence to Lesotho and the other Protectorates became inevitable, racist South Africa then modified its policy.

Firstly, South Africa offered to 'guide' the Protectorates in their economic and constitutional development. The then Premier Hendrik Verwoerd advocated that they should be 'linked with the Republic and the Bantu states (Bantustans) in a consultative body dealing with mutual political interests.' But that was as far as the diplomatic niceties went.

Secondly, South Africa, especially in the sixties, began to apply crude pressure against Lesotho. This took the following shape:

- Elimination of the passenger train services between South Africa and Maseru, capital of Lesotho.
- Imposition of air flight restrictions against Lesotho.
- Refusal of transit facilities to certain citizens of Lesotho going or coming from abroad. A case in point was the refusal of transit facilites to Dr. Seth Makotoko, then leader of the Marematlou Freedom Party to attend a

meeting of the Organisation of Africa Unity in Cairo in 1964. Then ten young Basotho who had gone on a tour of Europe and China were prohibited from landing at South Africa's Jan Smuts airport on their way home.

- General ill-treatment and humiliation of the Basotho.

But by far the most serious provocation was the almost open operations of the South African police in Lesotho acting in collusion with the expatriate police of the territory.

In 1961, a South Africa refugee, Anderson Ganyile was kidnapped from Lesotho by South Africa police and released only after a world wide furore over the incident.

LESOTHO AND GREAT BRITAIN

As can be clearly seen Britain's 'Protection' of Lesotho amounted to nothing much, in fact Lesotho ultimately became a direct colony of Britain. The consequence of this of course was a prolonged struggle for independence by the Basotho—a struggle which was impeded by Britain all along the line.

Important steps in the direction of acquiring legislative power were taken by the people of Lesotho in 1955 when the then Basutoland Council passed a motion 'that the Basutoland (Lesotho) Council be given power to make laws in all internal matters, such laws to be confirmed by the Paramount Chief . . . '

The British Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations insisted that such laws should not affect non-Basotho. His aim was to secure separate law and special privileges for the White trading community in the territory. These demands of the Commonwealth Relations Office were angrily rejected by the Basutoland Council.

After some hard bargaining a constitutional commission was set up whose recommendations stressed that it was only 'right and proper that the desire of the Basotho for a greater share in their own government be satisfied.'

A unified Lesotho delegation then proceeded to London for constitutional talks.

Then the British Secretary for Commonwealth Relations, Lord Home, seized upon the justified insistence of the Basotho that the membership of the Legislative Council be confined to the Basotho, to impose a constitution bristling with restrictions. This constitution which came into force in Lesotho in 1960 reserved for Britain the right to legislate exclusively on several matters such as foreign affairs, defence, internal security, public loans, customs and excise, broadcasting and television, posts and telegraphs etc.

But things moved fast. In September 1961, a motion was passed in the Basutoland Council demanding a review of the constitution. Then, Sir John Maud, British Resident Commissioner, opening a session of the Council in January, 1962 went out of his way to urge cordial links with South Africa. On the other hand the Lesotho Paramount Chief addressing the same session of the Council stressed the inadequacy of British rule and called for the granting of responsible government.

In May 1962 another constitutional commission was set up. And in this period, freedom organisations in Lesotho such as the Basutoland Congress Party were campaigning for independence as far afield as the United Nations.

On June 7th, 1962 the United Nations Organisation passed a resolution supporting Lesotho's demand for independence. Britain's response to this new independence offensive is characterised by Richard P. Stevens in the book 'Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland' who says that the British had:

> *. . . . expectation that the Basotho would act in accord with their economic dependence on South Africa and thus themselves impose restrictions upon possible revolutionary activity . . . .(Page 75.)*

In August 1963 British Resident Commissioner A.F. Giles addressing the opening session of the Council made no mention of independene. This 'speech from the throne' was rejected by the Council by 22 votes to 7.

In October 1963 the report of the Constitutional commission that had been set up in Lesotho was published. Its recommendations were as follows:

- Rapid transition to independence in 1965 and the country to have its own citizenship, flag, anthem and would be renamed Lesotho (instead of Basutoland).
- Lesotho would be a constitutional monarchy under Moshoeshoe II.
- There would be universal suffrage.
- There would be a two chamber National Assembly
- During a transitional period the territory would be regarded as a Protectorate instead of having a colonial status.
- Regarding matters such as defence, security and foreign policy, these would be handled jointly with Britain during the transitional period.

The British response to these demands was true to form British imperialism did its utmost to frustrate these clear independence demands by producing one excuse after another. For example Britain declared that she could not accept continued responsibility for internal security, defence and internal affairs and financial support, unless it is 'assured of means to discharge them.'

Britain wanted to retain power to amend the constitution and also wanted to keep headship of state.

But in a commendable united stand all the major political forces in Lesotho stood firm behind these demands.

The Basutoland Congress Party charged that:

> *The real activation behind this attitude of the British Government was the protection of a thousand odd*

million pounds invested by British capitalists in the fascist Republic of South Africa.

Although no independence date was fixed at these talks Britain presented a formula which provided that 12 months after the holding of elections under the new constitution, independence would be granted upon request.

THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER

The major modern freedom movement in Lesotho is the Basutoland Congress Party which was formed in 1952. Its leader Mr. Ntsu Mokhele, as well as many officials of the party gained their political experience in South Africa where they participated in the struggle against White minority domination in the ranks of the African National Congress. In fact, the Basutoland Congress Party–then known as the Basutoland African Congress–was formed after some discussions with leaders of the African National Congress.

The Basutoland Congress Party spearheaded the struggle for independence and from its inception gained the broad support of the people. The party associated itself with the movement for Pan-African unity and with the Afro-Asian solidarity movement.

It had seemed certain that the B.C.P. was destined to be the organisation that would emerge as leader of the people of Lesotho at independence but that was not to be the case for various reasons some objective others subjective. As far as subjective reasons went, it should suffice to state that it was regrettable that the B.C.P. failed to mobilise all progressive forces. And in fact the party engaged in anti-leftist activities within Lesotho and launched unprovoked attacks both against the African National Congress and the Communist Party in South Africa. These tactics proved disastrous especially considering the fact that the genuinely patriotic elements in Lesotho faced a veritable coalition of reactionary forces headed by British imperialism and South Africa.

The answer of imperialism, especially of South African imperialism, to the rise of a patriotic movement was the creation of a puppet organisation in the form of the Basutoland National Party (B.N.P.). This organisation received open financial, political and other forms of support from the South African racists. During the pre-independence elections of April, 1965, the powerful South African mass media were placed entirely at the disposal of this renegade group.

Of extreme importance to the development of the pro-imperialist block in Lesotho was the role played by the Catholic Church. As far back as 1960, the Catholic Church interfered directly with the general elections held in that year in Lesotho. Two Catholic Oblate Bishops published a pastoral letter entitled: 'The Church and Politics: Duties and Responsibilities of Catholics in Basutoland.' This document went on to apply the principles cited by Pope Pius XII when dealing with the electoral situation in Italy 1948 in which the Pontiff forbade Catholics to vote for parties which worked 'hand in glove' with the Communists. B.N.P. leaders like Leabua Jonathan are prominent Catholics who at the time of the foundation of the party pledged loyalty to the British crown and stressed dependence of the party on God. The Catholic missionaries gave support by soliciting funds for the B.N.P. from Quebec and West Germany and by supplying names of prospective members. It is estimated that the Catholic Church has a membership of some 215,000 in Lesotho.

ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

The economic backwardness, the degrading poverty of Lesotho is the direct consequence of British colonialism. We have stated elsewhere that the Basotho were robbed of the best part of their lands—the rich corn fields, by the South African Boers. The land and natural resources that remained in their hands are hardly developed at all. There is no industry or opportunities for employment.

Of the total land area of 1,700 square miles only 1,453 square miles are cultivatable. Some 170,000 households in Lesotho have an average landholding of 4 acres each, whilst some 161,230 households have no land at all. Cash crops such as wheat, beans, peas as well as wool and mohair together constitute over 50% of total exports.

As far as minerals and mining activities are concerned, gold seems to be available in commercial quantity. And so are phosphate deposits but Britain undertook no efficient exploitation of these. Diamonds have been found in abundance, but in 1955, the monopoly of the right of prospecting and mining diamonds was awarded to a representative of a South African mining house, a certain Colonel Jack Scott, for a period of five years.

Water, especially because of the geographical situation of Lesotho, is not only abundant but could be a very valuable resource for domestic and industrial purposes but none of the numerous schemes put forward for its development, has been implemented.

This pathetic state of affairs has compelled thousands of Basotho to leave their homes to work on the mines, farms and industries in South Africa. Eighty-three thousand males were absent from the territory in 1959. That amounted to 43% of the adult male population.

Lesotho depends almost entirely on South Africa for its everyday requirements of manufactured goods. At the same time she disposes of virtually all her exports, some 75 to 90 per cent, to South Africa.

The largest part of her revenue, derived from customs and excise are collected by South Africa for the whole Rand currency area. Under recently revised conditions of the 1910 customs and excise duties Lesotho now receives only 0.47093% (as compared with 0.88575%) of all customs collected in the Republic of South Africa. Following this revision the 1965-66 revenue from this source dropped by more than 50% from R2,560,000 to R1,222,200. This economic state of affairs alone is tailor-made to reduce Lesotho to a meek hostage of the powerful Republic of South Africa. But in so far as South African propagandists claim the Republic to be an economic paradise giving employment to Africans of neighbouring states, the Lesotho health figures are an eye-opener. A survey carried out by Dr. Munoz of the World Health Organisation states that 85% of Lesotho's people consumed unbalanced diets. Incomes earned from South Africa provide mere subsistence standards of living. On the other hand Basotho labour power is used to depress the wages of African workers in the Republic.

THE ANTI LESOTHO PLOT

Leabua was returned to power in Lesotho in the 1965 pre-independence elections after a fantastic campaign of open interference in the elections by the agents of the South African regime and the mass media. Even then, his Basutoland National Party just managed to limp home as a result of a split between the patriotic parties. The B.N.P. won 31 seats polling 41.63% of the popular vote. The B.C.P. and the Marematlou Freedom Party won 25 and 4 seats respectively giving the combined opposition a popular poll of 49%. Leabua himself was defeated at the polls and was only returned to parliament in a by-election in the safe seat of Mpharane. As we have already indicated Leabua owed a great deal of his support to the intervention of the Catholic Church.

No sooner was Leabua in power than he declared that he would not allow a 'single embassy of any communist country or countries who are sympathetic to the aims of communism.'

But above all Leabua completely sold out Lesotho to

South Africa and himself became nothing better than a public relations officer who sought to sell apartheid abroad as something good. Leabua had frequent consultations with the South African racist regime and its agents. He appointed leading South African civil servants as his advisers. His economic adviser became the pro-apartheid tobacco magnate Anton Rupert. And the Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut supplied the commissioner for commerce, industry and tourism. Top civil servants from South Africa occupied the key posts of Chief Justice, attorney general and most significantly a White South African was appointed senior electoral officer.

As can well be imagined, the South African authorities were not only beside themselves with joy at the 'smart' performance of their protege but they did their utmost to consolidate Leabua's position. But typical of their lot, all they could think of was cheap bribery. South Africa made a personal gift of 100,000 bags of maize to Leabua. These bags of grain are estimated to have been worth some £150,000. They were labelled 'Leabua Jonathan' and were accompanied with leaflets bearing the slogan 'Leabua is feeding the people'.

During weekends some White South African farmers crossed the borders into Lesotho with their tractors to plough the lands of 'Leabua's people'. For South Africa, the ploughing operation proved to be a big propaganda weapon in their campaign to try to beautify Apartheid.

As for Leabua this flattery went straight to his head. He got into the swing of it all. When a new highway, passing through the capital Maseru, was completed, he immediately named it 'Leabua Highway'. Peace corps sent to Lesotho by the Johnson administration arrived in Maseru chanting 'LBJ' . . . 'Leabua Jonathan'.

As the elections of January 1970 approached, Leabua and his apartheid masters thought they had done more than enough to win votes. But to make doubly sure they engaged in feverish activity to prepare a rigging of the elections. Some of the tactics of the Leabua regime consisted in cancelling from the voters' roll the names of probable opposition voters in marginal constituencies. The deposit for parliamentary candidates was raised from £25 to £100 and nomination day was announced at a week's notice. But Leabua and his overlords had reckoned without taking into account the determination of the people of Lesotho to be free and independent.

Leabua's ruling Basutoland National Party was decively defeated. The Basutoland Congress Party won 37 seats out of a total of 61, the B.N.P. won 23 and the Marematlou Freedom Party I.

As all the world knows Leabua refused to relinquish power. He went to the radio station and announced 'I have seized power and I am not ashamed.' His very next steps were to arrest scores of opposition leaders and to ban the Communist Party of Lesotho. The King, Moshoeshoe II was placed under house arrest. Of high significance in these developments was the role played by a veritable coalition of reactionaries, namely South Africa, British Imperialism, Taiwan and West Germany. Taiwan and West Germany were the first to recognise the putchists.

More light needs to be thrown on the role of Dr. A. Baumhauer, West German adviser, to the Basutoland National Party, who has already been accused in Maseru of influencing Jonathan to break his oath of allegiance to the Constitution.

The coup in Lesotho where there is no national army was made possible thanks to the collaboration of White expatriate police officers who command the police force in the territory. These officers are British. They include F.T. Roach in command of the key Police Mobile Unit. Lesotho's Commissioner of Police is J.H. Hindmarsh who is on secondment from Britain. In addition to these two there are 14 other British expatriates holding senior posts in the police force who are on the British pay packet.

The London *Sunday Times* of February 8th, 1970 tells us that 'British aid supplies all the country's capital account and about half its current budget spending, totalling more than £4,000,000 in the present financial year . . . '

The same newspaper adds: 'Britain is not anxious to hand Lesotho to South Africa on a plate' (8/2/70). Such statements are of extremely dubious value in view of British betrayal, all along the line, of a country which had humbly, though mistakenly, sought her protection.

Despite South African backing, Jonathan's ability to hold on to power is dubious, his position precarious. Despite severe pressure, the 22-man Council of Chiefs voted (by a four-fifths majority) against Jonathan's motion to depose the progressive and independence-minded King Moshoeshoe II from the throne. Moshoeshoe had earlier earned the vocal displeasure of South Africa's imperialist press when he told them he was 'socialist and pan-Africanist' in his outlook.

Even more ominous for Jonathan and his clique is the news of spreading guerrilla activities in the mountains. The coup supporters claimed to have killed one of the resistance leaders, Clifford Leepa, in an armed clash between his group and the police. No doubt this incident marks the beginning but certainly not the end of armed conflict. Lesotho ('the Switzerland of Southern Africa') contains the towering Drakensberg and Maluti ranges; it offers ideal terrain for guerrillas.

Jonathan's gamble for power has already shown his contempt for the will of the people. But even he will think twice, no doubt, before calling in armed forces from the Republic to prop up his illegitimate regime. To the charges he already faces of treason and of precipitating a civil war, will be added that of bringing back the Boers to Lesotho; something no Mosotho would tolerate. Vorster would no doubt think twice as well before embarking upon such a desperate venture. It would rouse a hornet's nest not only in Lesotho but also in the Republic where the Basotho people have fifteen million kinsfolk and loyal allies.

Obviously, the last word in the developments in Lesotho belongs to the people themselves. We are confident that they will live up to their great traditions of struggle against injustice and for their freedom. Meanwhile, the rest of the progressive world must oppose recognition of the illegal regime and demand the immediate restoration of the constitution, the release of political prisoners and an end to outside interference in the affairs of Lesotho. Hands off Lesotho!

> *As a result of the extensive colonial policy, the European proletarian partly finds himself in a position where it is not his labour but the labour of the practically enslaved natives in the colonies, that maintains the whole of society. The British bourgeoisie, for example, derives more profit from the many millions of the population of India and other colonies than from the British workers. In certain countries this provides the material and economic basis for infecting the proletariat with colonial chauvinism.* –LENIN

> *The Russian Marxists ... committed the following mistake: instead of applying the theory of Marx to the special conditions prevailing in Russia (Marx and Engels always taught that their theory was not a dogma, but a guide to action) they uncritically repeated the conclusions drawn from the application of Marx's theory to foreign conditions, to a different epoch.* –LENIN

THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY

William L. Patterson

The Black Panther Party for Self-Defence was born in the fall of 1966. It was not a spontaneous eruption of black youth. The white police in the ghetto of West Oakland, California were notorious for their savage racist brutality. Widespread unemployment, poverty, premature death due to malnutrition and inadequate hopsital facilities, miserable sanitation, filthy streets, dilapidated and poorly equipped schools and housing were the lot of black citizens and their children. It was a national picture, to be found in every large city in the United States but, in Oakland, it was worse.

A political organisation committed to the protection of their lives and their parents' property was a dream of Oakland's black youth. The Black Panther Party for Self-Defence emerged out of the political, economic and cultural hell that black youth were taught was for them the best of all possible worlds. It was a long-considered reaction to indiscriminate police violence. Black youth demanded a change.

EARLY CONCEPTS OF THE PANTHERS

At the time of the creation of the Black Panthers, the social and political outlook of young Huey Newton, and the small coterie of youth gathered around him did not extend beyond the idea of some kind of self-defence, nor was that concept clearly defined.

Black youth were seeking an end to 'white terror.' They believed that the time had come to challenge and, if possible, put a stop to terrorisation as a way of life in the ghetto. Stress was placed on ending police terror.

Early in the process of their tremendous growth and development, the Panthers escaped from a dangerous entrapment which American imperialism's ideologists have tried to make a dominant factor in ghetto thinking. They escaped from the illusion that black freedom fighters had to go it alone, that except for a few white intellectuals they had no allies, that the police were an independent political force whose bestiality had its roots in an innate hatred of black people. The Panthers were only momentarily the victims of that line of thinking. Both the subjective and objective reasons why this illusion was accepted at all are easy to understand.

The Panther leadership believed that the police were an independent political entity. It was not for them a terroristic arm of the 'establishment.' In their early days, they lacked practical political experience in the national liberation struggle. They had little or no understanding of the operation and structure of capitalist society. In terms of theoretical development, they were in no position accurately to measure the dimensions of the ideological control the 'establishment' exercised over the economic, political and cultural channels of American life; nor were they in a position to formulate an extensive programme of political action. Knowledge of the class essence and scope of police brutality, the vast range of the fight against racism due to its capitalist source, had for the Panthers not yet come into focus.

In those days the Black Panthers could not clearly discern the degree to which virulent racism had been made an inseparable part of America's national psychology. The leadership did not recognise the irreconcilable contradictions between the constitutional and inalienable human rights of black Americans and the profit system. They did not see that the liberation struggle transcended the realm of self-defence and that not education along, but only a programme of struggle, based upon the realities of the social system, could guarantee any successes in the struggle against the terror.

THE POISONOUS INFLUENCE OF RACISM

Racist myths, with skin colour determining intelligence, had been made a vital factor in the thinking of the leaders of organised labour, the white church, social educational and political institutions of the white community. This prostitution of science had warped and distorted white concepts of morality and ethics. It dulled especially any appreciation of the mutual interests of the black people and the majority of white society.

The illusion that separate, single-handed combat could be waged against the police, and that restrictions superimposed on the police from community forces would completely alter the status of black Americans, was the product of narrow nationalistic, ghettoised thinking. Black America was not at fault. This concept was the brain-child of capitalism. It was fashioned and projected by bourgeois ideologists for black consumption. However, the contemptuous attitude with which labour's top leadership met the appeals of black workers for a labour-black alliance in struggle gave what seemed to be validity to the idea. The class collaboration of the majority of the white leaders around the issue of white superiority did terrific damage to the interests of all of labour—white as well as black.

The righteous political demands of black workers and the black community constituted a plank that fitted logically into labour's programme of struggle. Yet, it must be stated, that labour did not respond.

Not realising capitalism's vast potentialities to seduce leaders of organised labour, blacks were mystified by the rejection of their unity proposals. They saw that the material interests of the masses, white as well as black, were being sacrificed on the altar of colour superiority. All whites began to look alike to blacks when the question of the rights of blacks was raised. Had the white labour leadership acknowledged and accepted its class responsibilities and responded positively to the unity advances of black labour and the black community, the foundation for a broad offensive against the mutual enemy would long ago have been laid down in the U.S.A. Venal, white labour leadership betrayed its class, the vital interests of the nation and that of peace and freedom-loving mankind.

Back to Africa movements sprang from this situation. In the heavily populated regions of the southern states, the right of self-determination for black people was propagated. The nation was divided. As a result some black leaders were ready to repudiate the legitimate stake of black Americans to an equal share in America. Affected by this reasoning, the Black Panther Party took the only course it then saw as feasible. It was ready to go into the struggle alone.

The organisation of the Panthers testified to the growing radicalisation of the ghetto and the rising political temper of the black community. The black liberation movement was broadening and deepening. Black workers were organising black caucuses in the trade unions. They were seeking to break through the racist entanglement and to achieve a unification with labour along the colour line. The black liberation movement was feeling its way to an offensive in all spheres of human relations. This was the general situation into which the Black Panthers emerged and developed their activity.

LESSONS LEARNED IN STRUGGLE

In their earliest experiences at mounting an anti-police brutality self-defence movement, the Panthers learned political lessons that brought rapid, if uneven, political development.

The bourgeoisie in the United States had no intention of permitting the Panthers, or any organised, disciplined social group, democratically to defend the lives, property, inalienable and constitutional rights of ghetto dwellers. To permit that was to lend credence to and strengthen the struggle for equality of opportunity. The bourgeoisie had no intention of permitting any challenge to its own policy of divide and rule. Police brutality was intensified. It became more indiscriminate.

The metropolitan press, tongue in cheek, favourably greeted the criticism of police brutality. It was against brutality and violence—but it piously stressed the necessity to maintain 'law and order.' Its conception of law and order, however, did not begin with the enforcement and respect for the human dignity of blacks, or their rights under the Constitution. The position of the metropolitan press stood reality on its head. Under the guise of maintaining law and order, it lent encouragement to police repression against the black community.

The courts, in a frenzy, hurriedly tried the victims of police savagery. They 'railroaded' the victims to jail or imposed long-term probationary conditions upon them. The legislative bodies of government passed no effective remedial laws or ordinances. The administrative bodies, from the President down, called for the enforcement of bourgeois 'law and order' —the maintenance of the status quo. Racism became a policy of government precisely because it was a source of superprofits for capital.

The lessons of the struggle registered sharply with the black youth. The Panther leadership recognise that a broader political offensive was necessary to realise self-defence they sought. It took a political and organisational leap forward that carried it beyond the positions occupied by any of the other organisations of the black liberation movement. It began to measure the strength of capitalism in the United States and to analyse the position and weight of the forces aligned against blacks. The Panthers wanted to know positively whether blacks had natural allies or not– who they were, if there were any, and why they had not appeared upon the political horizon to fight the common foe. The illusion that the black people, of historical necessity, had to go it alone was being challenged. The projecting of such ideas by the ideologists of the bourgeoisie was being exposed in the throes of struggle and a study of bourgeois racist ideology.

The Panther leadership acknowledged the need for an internal change. It dropped the term 'for Self-Defence' from its name. It began to see that unity of the oppressed was something for which a desperate fight had to be made. Despite the racist attitude of the white labour leadership, that unity had to be won. The ruling class had seduced the white labour leaders; it must not be permitted to dupe black leadership. White labour had been affected by the myths of white superiority. Its rank and file could be won to black-white unity in struggle.

IDENTITY WITH MAOISM

The Panther leadership recognised that it faced a herculean task. But the task had to be faced. It delared itself a Marxist -Leninist political party, not realizing fully that so far-reaching a declaration did not ipso facto bring the objective sought to fruition. The Panther leaders grasped at and embraced the doctrines of Mao Tse-tung and the present leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. They failed to realise that Mao and his supporters were all for the go-it-alone idea which experience was forcing the Panthers to repudiate. They did not recognise that Maoism was a denial of the historic role the Panthers were beginning to attribute to the working class.

The Panthers were enraptured with the role Che Guevara was attempting to play in the countries of South America. They did not see that Marxism-Leninism taught that there was a reality far more complex than can be seen through a casual observation of events and historical differences in the development of countries. They did not see that guerrilla tactics widely applied to the United States would mean going it alone under the most adverse conditions.

In their splendid attempt at a political leap forward, the Panther leadership did not see clearly that certain steps in ideological development could be ignored. There were profound and fundamental reasons why the vast majority of the Communist parties of the world –including the Communist Party, U.S.A. –struggled against the political economic and ideological stand taken by the Maoists.

The Maoists denied the estimate of the changed world relation of forces. But it was precisely this new situation which helped to prove that blacks in the United States did not have to go it alone; they were part of the world liberation movement. In fact, they had become a vitally significant part of that world movement.

Marxism teaches, Lenin said, that: 'Only knowledge of the basic features of a given epoch can provide the basis for reckoning with the specific features of one or another country.' *(Collected Works,* Vol.21, p.145.)

Despite organisational, political and ideological weaknesses the Black Panthers, in a remarkably short time through struggle, had displayed tremendous political growth, development and flexibility. This has to be noted. It reflects the limitless potentialities of the black liberation movement.

LEARN NEED OF BLACK-WHITE UNITY

The Black Panther Party repudiated the anti-white abstraction. It began to recognise the vital importance of the role of classes in a struggle in which class, race and nationalism were predominant factors. It recognised that the unity within the working class, between workers regardless of the colour of their skin, is an imperative and historical necessity in every country and on a world scale. It launched a fight to attain that unity against the racism that permeates most of the leadership of organised labour. It rejected the position that labour is a natural foe of the black people because of 'irreconcilable racist differences.'

The Panthers are the first black-led organisation to understand the menace of anti-Communism and unqualifiedly to express opposition to it.

A feature of the Black Panthers is that they saw emotion and courage as essential attributes of successful struggle. They have, most of all, come to realise that success in the liberation movement demands above all else an understanding of the science of social development. They have emphasised the study of the Marxist-Leninist classics as imperative. Despite grave ideological weaknesses that still remain in their political outlook, they have declared that the Black Panther Party is a Marxist-Leninist party and launched as a major slogan: 'Power to the People!'

The Panther Party has shown an awareness that agents of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) have penetrated its ranks. It seeks their elimination through a practical programme of struggle.

CONFERENCE AGAINST FASCISM

While only three years in the liberation struggle, the Black Panther Party issued a call for a United Front of Struggle Against Fascism –basing itself on the call made by George Dimitrov in 1935 at the Seventh Congress of the then existing Communist International. It openly called upon the peace forces, the anti-poverty fighters, all progressive forces to fight against racism and for unity of the 'New Left' against fascism.

Political appeals by black Americans for a united front against racism are nothing new. They have been a constant in the life of the black people since the Civil War. But the Call for a United Front of Struggle Against Fascism was not based upon the economic, political and ideological demands of black people alone. It was based upon the life-and-death struggle of the American people – of all anti-imperialists. The July preparatory conference was a huge success. The follow-up, later this year, must be made even more so.

While the call for a united front against fascism undoubtedly was inspired to a great degree by the murderous attacks upon the Panthers by the local and state forces, the conference was more than a device to mobilise forces for protection of the lives of its members.

The conference call was in and of itself a testimonial to the political growth of the Panther leadership. It was based upon a growing recognition that the defeat of American reaction demanded a signal sharpening of the struggle for unity of the country's progressive forces regardless of political affiliation, creed, colour, race or nationality. It was a recognition of the grave danger of anti-Communism.

On its part, the conference recognised the imperative necessity for all progressive forces to fight for the constitutional rights of the Panther Party and against the genocidal attack levelled against its organisation under the slogan of 'law and order.' No effort was made to make the conference the exclusive property of the Black Panther Party.

It is necessary that Communists, especially, should recognise the urgency of supporting this effort, regardless of the differences the Communist Party may have with the Panthers on the degree of fascist development in our country. In his report to the 19th Convention of the Communist Party, Gus

Hall stated:

> *U.S. imperialism remains the chief danger to the independence of peoples and nations. It is the most ruthless exploiter of peoples. It has heightened the danger to world peace everywhere. It is the centre of the world forces of reaction fighting against socialism. Its aggressive economic policies are a menace to economic standards and to economic independence throughout the non-socialist world. Its escalated ideological offensive, aimed at the softening and infiltration of socialist and liberated countries, has created a new danger to the progressive forces of the world. These efforts at ideological penetration are now at an all-time peak.* (On Course: The Revolutionary Process, p.15.)

Had we at that time had a fascist America, that convention could not have been held openly. Had the convention been held 'underground' because of the presence of fascism, the defeat and destruction of fascism would have been of historical necessity, the centre of emphasis.

Henry Winston, our National Chairman said at the 19th Convention:

> *We are, comrades, not going into a period of ease. That is not what is before us. We are entering into a period of sharp class battles in which the clash between the classes, of the people against monopoly, will reveal itself more and more. The storm signals are presently with us.* (Build the Communist Party, pp. 8-9.)

A great responsibility devolves upon our Party. First and foremost, it is in the United States that the main fight must be waged against racism and the fascist-minded clique who constitute the military-industrial complex. It is here that the deepest roots of racism and nascent fascism are to be found. That fight must be carried into every sphere of American life. Forty millions of black, brown and red Americans are directly affected by racism and the danger of fascism threatens their very existence.

The Panthers now have organised contingents in approximately 33 states. At the present they are in the centre of police attacks. J. Edgar Hoover, the fascist-minded head of the FBI, calls the Panthers the most dangerous organisation in the New Left. That is some evidence of their importance.

The membership of the Communist Party should stand in the forefront in defence of the Black Panthers. While conducting a dialogue with the Panthers on the differences that exist between us, this must not stand in the way of solidly supporting the efforts of the Panthers to defeat racism and bring about unity of the black and white working class. For we know that racism feeds fascism. The destruction of racism leads to a decisive defeat of fascism

---

communist
viewpoint

A theoretical-political journal dealing with Canadian and world affairs from the standpoint of scientific socialism.

Single copy 75¢	One year (6 issues) $4.00	Two years $7.00.
Outside Canada	One year $5.00	Two years $8.50.

Progress Subscription Service, 487 Adelaide St. W., Toronto 2B, Canada

AFRICA

Notes and Comments

by Nxele

AFRICAN MILITANCY REKINDLED IN KHARTOUM

The Sixth Summit Conference of the Heads of State and Government of the East and Central African States which met in Khartoum from January 26 – 28 seems to have rekindled the spark of African militancy. The crucial issue of the liberation of the still unliberated parts of Africa stood high on the agenda. The communique issued at the end of the Conference states:

'In the political field, the conference gave priority to the Lusaka Manifesto on Southern Africa and to the study of the ways and means in view of enabling the member states to take up the challenge levelled to Africa and to the international community by the South African and Portuguese governments through their rejection of the Manifesto on Southern Africa . . . . .'

The communique recalled the provision in the Manifesto which stipulated that 'in case the peaceful approach to the decolonisation problems is rejected, there will be no other alternative but the increase of the assistance granted to the liberation movements.'

It also pointed out 'the solemn commitment of the Heads of State and Government of the Organisation of African Unity, enshrined in the Charter of the Organisation, to spare no effort for the liberation of the territories still under foreign domination.'

Discussing the political implication of the Southern Africa Charter, the President of the Sudanese Revolutionary Council, Major-General Gaafai Mohamed Nimeri who chaired the Conference, said: 'The Southern Africa Charter adopted at Lusaka in April, 1969, endorsed by the African summit conference and blessed by the United Nations, reflects an enormous flexibility on the part of our peoples in dealing with the issues they face. Yet South Africa and Portugal have rejected this attempt and voted against the Charter from the rostrum of the United Nations.'

The Conference decided inter alia:

* *To intensify by all adequate means the national liberation struggle in Africa by making available all necessary facilities to the liberation movements as would enable them to carry out the struggle.*

* *To request His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia to contact all African Heads of State and Government for the quick and efficient implementation of the decisions relating to the strengthening of the liberation struggle.*

* *To request His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I to contact the National Liberation Movements with a view to co-ordinating their activities so as to give maximum efficiency to their sacrifices and the assistance of Independent Africa.*

In this regard the urgency of the situation was stressed.

Said Major-General Nimeri, 'Nevertheless, this should be regarded as an urgent task, no matter how much sacrifice it should take.'

Another important aspect to emerge at the conference was the exposure of the role of the NATO powers in support of the racist-fascist regimes in Southern Africa.

President Kaunda of Zambia who opened the Conference, charged:

> *It is common knowledge that France, Italy, The United Kingdom and West Germany are some of the powers still oiling and bolstering the South African war machine. This is being done in spite of the United Nations ban on the sale of arms to South Africa.*

And the Sudanese President Major General Nimeri added: 'The foreign monopolies stand behind the challenge which we confront, feeding and supporting it . . . . .'

The growing confrontation between foreign monopolies aiding the racists on the one hand and Independent Africa on the other hand, has had repercussions in Zambia.

In a statement issued on January 16, 1970, the Zambian Government warned the Chairman of Barclays Bank D.C.O. that some of his activities were of a purely political nature and favoured interests opposed to the welfare and progress of Zambia.

A letter of complaint sent to him read

> *The Government of the Republic of Zambia has taken note of the fact that the Chairman of Barclays Bank and Barclays Bank D.C.O. is indulging in political activity to the prejudice of the interest of the Republic of Zambia in the following manner. The Chairman of Barclays D.C.O., as the representative of the bank which is a member of the Association, serves on the Committee of the United Kingdom South Africa Trade Association*

> *Limited, an organisation which, apart from its trade promotional activity, politically promotes the interests of South Africa in Great Britain. Furthermore, Barclays D.C.O., because it is the largest regular advertiser and, therefore, the main source of revenue, support the journal* Southern Africa. Southern Africa *is a politically orientated journal of very limited circulation which favours the South African government and follows a line opposed to the interests of the Republic of Zambia* . . . . .

During the night of December 26 last year, agents of the racist-fascist regime sabotaged the Tanzania-Zambia oil pipe line off the town of Iringa. An attempt to blow up a bridge on the main road link between the two countries on the same occasion failed.

The reading of the signs emerging from Khartoum seems to indicate that the fresh aggressive challenge to Africa by the racist-fascist regimes of Portugal, Rhodesia and South Africa has not fallen on deaf ears. Moreover, it seems that the call for African unity in the face of the enemy onslaught was issued with some urgency.

THE FIGHTING IN ZIMBABWE

The new offensive of African Freedom guerillas in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) started appropriately enough with the beginning of the year. This time no elaborate press conferences were laid on by the political leaders of the authentic liberation movement because the issues involved in the fighting in that country have become much clearer since the dramatic battles of the Zapu-A.N.C. guerillas in the winter of 1967 and in mid. '68. The present campaign of the liberation forces headed by the Zimbabwe African People's Union (Zapu) kicked off with short sharp battles which have been particularly damaging to the enemy. One of these was a highly successful raid on an airport and a military camp in the Victoria Falls-Wankie area. This took place during the third week of January.

But the most significant fact is the stage of maturity which the guerilla movement in Zimbabwe has now reached. News from the fighting zones indicate that guerilla activity covers many areas which are in different points of the country. In the West there was the Victoria Falls-Wankie action. In the East, in Sinoia-Makuti area Zapu combatants in a series of ambushes and surprise actions, described by the Salisbury regime as 'unprovoked attacks', have inflicted increasing casualties on the enemy. Then on January 24th, the guerillas struck in an area north-east of Bulawayo, the second largest city in Zimbabwe. In that engagement a commander of the Rhodesia Africa Rifles I.J. Brading was killed.

Describing the latest series of battles the Agence France Presse of January 26th, said:

> *The latest infiltrators are more aggressive than earlier guerilla groups . . . .*

This statement serves to confirm that during the so-called periods of lull, the guerillas review their experiences and improve on their tactics.

The enemy strategy has followed the same old sickening pattern. Following the attack on the Victoria Falls airport by the guerillas, both the Wankie and the Victoria Falls airports were closed temporarily to civilian traffic to enable the landing of more South African troop reinforcements. In fact the current fighting has demonstrated once more that troops from racist South Africa are actually holding the first line of battle in Rhodesia. The military camp in the Wankie area attacked by the guerillas was manned exclusively by South African troops.

The second development is also not new. The regimes of Rhodesia and South Africa have made more threats of retaliatory action against neighbouring Zambia which they accuse of harbouring the freedom movements of Southern Africa.

The newspaper *Times of Zambia* of February 3, 1970 reports that:

> *Travelling on the Zambesi River from Mambova harbour west of Livingstone, to Western Province has become 'awfully unsafe' because of South African and Rhodesian planes which patrol the river border every day . . . . .*

The same newspaper reports the story of a man who was a passenger on a boat which travelled on the Zambesi in the Sesheke district of Zambia. He said:

'As our boat cruised slowly we heard the buzz of planes and suddenly two headed straight for us. We hid our faces . . .'

A Zambia information department officer returning from an inspection of the border areas in Zambia's Southern Province confirmed these reports and stated that villagers hid themselves as planes with search lights swept over their homes.

And the Rhodesian-South African fascist troops have been at their very best again when it came to perpetration of atrocities. The *Times of Zambia* (January 24) described a gruesome incident obviously calculated to drive fear into the masses. The newspaper reports:

> *Rhodesian forces who shot dead a freedom fighter in the Zambesi Gorge on Sunday tied the man's body to their helicopter and flew back to rebel territory with the corpse dangling underneath.*

SANCTIONS FLOP

It becomes also necessary to examine other factors operating in the Rhodesian scene. What became of the economic sanctions against Rhodesia sponsored by Britain and the United Nations? It is of course not our aim here to spell out the sanctions busting activities of several imperialist countries and capitalist groups including the British. The sanctions project was doomed the minute the imperialists vetoed their extension to South Africa and Portugal, countries which now provide the economic life line for Rhodesia. Anyway, we would have been expecting too much if we were ever naive enough to think those Western financial interests who have such a large stake in Rhodesia and Southern Africa would enforce sanctions against themselves. And what is happening on the Rhodesia economic front? The *New York Times* (January 30, 1970) in an article entitled 'Rhodesia Adjusts and Gains', states:

> *Notwithstanding sanctions, Rhodesia can probably maintain her present economic level, very satisfactorily for the few, but not for the masses of newly educated Africans struggling to get jobs . . . .*
>
> *On the one side, there are 96,000 whites earning an average of $3,900 a year. On the other hand there are 663,000 blacks earning $403. Beyond that is the vast subsistence economy representing about five million blacks. . . .*

The *Times of Zambia* (January 14, 1970) reports that:

> *Unemployment has reached massive proportions in Bulawayo according to trade union officials. Newsmen were called to the municipal employment exchange today to see queues of over 1000 Africans lining the*

streets outside the building . . . . .

Therefore what is happening is that the Rhodesian racists are doing what they have been doing all along, passing on to the shoulders of the Africans any negative economic difficulties in the country. Perhaps these are the reasons why the Rhodesian racist regime is assuming panic measures to supress 'espionage' activity directed at gaining economic information in the country. A new maximum penalty of 25 years jail will be imposed for this offence.

To sum up this situation, we should on the one hand note the complete bankruptcy of the economic sanctions project and its ineffectiveness in toppling the Smith illegal regime. On the other hand we cannot fail to note the new Richard Nixon doctrine on Southern Africa which was spelled out in his state-of-the-world message delivered last week of January. Nixon has warned the independent African states against the use of force against Rhodesia and South Africa, in spite of the fact that economic sanctions against the Rhodesian regime have failed (due largely to South Africa's role in sabotaging this project) and in spite of the fact that it is precisely the Rhodesian and South African regimes which threaten force against neighbouring African states.

THE AFRICAN ANSWER

The Zambian Minister of Home Affairs, Mr Lewis Changufu, in a recent statement, quite rightly rejected Rhodesian attempts to blame Zambia for the activities of freedom guerillas in Zimbabwe.

He correctly pointed out that the guerilla action was the direct result of the oppression of the African majority by the Rhodesian racists.

Another significant development in this period has been an important joint meeting of the National Executive Committees of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and the African National Congress which took place in Zambia during the middle of January. The two organisations exchanged information and experiences on the development of the struggle in their respective countries and appropriate decisions taken were reflected in a joint communique issued by the two organisations. Inter alia the communique said that the organisations decided

> *to intensify the struggle for national liberation on the basis of their programmes.*

The organisations scrutenised their co-ordinating machinery to ensure effective working of the political and military strategy of the alliance. The two organisations undertook to work for a deeper commitment to the alliance by the peoples of Zimbabwe and South Africa. And the organisations emphasised that:

> *. . .the significance of our common struggle against white minority rule in Southern Africa extends beyond our borders, it is closely connected with our whole continent's struggle for true independence and social progress and is part of a world-wide struggle against imperialism.*

NIGERIA: END OF A WAR

> *I am now convinced that a stop must be put to the bloodshed which is going on as a result of the war. I am also convinced that the suffering of our people must be brought to an end immediately.*
>
> *Our people are disillusioned. Those elements of the old government regime who have made negotiations and reconciliation impossible have now voluntarily removed themselves from us.*

I have therefore instructed an orderly engagement of troops.

That was Lieut-Colonel Effiong speaking in a broadcast announcing the surrender of Biafra. Effiong had become on January 10, the officer administering the regime of Biafra following the flight of Colonel Odumego Ojuku from the enclave. Thus the second week of January saw the end of a tragic civil war which had lasted for 30 months.

Major-General Yakubu Gowon, Head of the Federal Military Government declaring the end of the war announced:
'We have arrived at one of the greatest moments of the history of our nation. A great moment of victory for national unity and reconciliation. We have arrived at the end of a tragic and painful conflict.'

Without doubt all those who have the true interests of Africa at heart were greatly relieved at the news of the end of this tragic civil war and the dawning of peace in Nigeria.

Moreover, there were early signs that reconciliation would be fast in coming. Lieut-Colonel Effiong announced that resistance by the former secessionist movement in Biafra would not continue. He said. 'I would also like to assure you that any question of a government-in-exile is repudiated by our people.'

And when the hour of negotiations arrived, both sides agreed to negotiate peace terms on the basis of the resolutions of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).

On its side the Federal Government reiterated its promise of a 'general amnesty for all those misled into the futile attempt to disintegrate the country'. And added Major General Gowon :
'We must demonstrate our will for honourable reconciliation within a united Nigeria.'

Those who witnessed television pictures of the signing of the peace agreement in Nigeria must have been deeply moved by the obviously sincere scenes of reconciliation among the former belligerants.

But it would appear that certain forces were angered by the turn of events and were seeking to open up the old wounds. The Pope expressed fear that there would be unbridled acts of genocide against the Ibo people. The genocide story had been a central theme emanating from certain quarters who had supported the Biafra seccesionist cause.

But the report of the Organisation of African Unity Observers as far back as December 1968 indicated that:
'Observers have neither seen nor heard any evidence of act of genocide perpetrated by Federal troops against either the Ibo tribe or against any tribe of the Federation.'

But the most disgusting affair in the period of the end of the civil war was the hysterical campaign whipped up by right wing newspapers all over Europe 'on behalf of the starving people' in the former secessionist Biafra enclave. To be sure, pictures of emaciated Kwashiorkor-inflicted babies were exhibited on the television screen and in the front pages of newspapers for weeks on end. Ultimately, those behind this campaign were blunt enough to suggest that they did not believe the Nigerian Government and its Red Cross services would be competent enough to feed and rehabilitate the victims of the civil war. And as late as the end of February, the Nigerian Government complained that the Catholic Church was still collecting funds among its flock for the 'rehabilitation of Biafra.'

Meanwhile, the French newspapers *Le Monde* (Weekly Selection February 18, 1970) reported that:

The Nigerian government has made a massive effort to aid the civil war refugees. The latest official figures available in Paris indicate that the Nigerian Red Cross has provided relief for nearly a million and a half people and opened new hospitals and dispensaries. Simultaneously, all the economic resources of the nation were mobilised by the Federal Executive Council.'

The Nigerian Government firmly rebuffed these racialist-inspired attempts at outside interference. And with the statement 'Let them keep their blood money', the Federal Government rejected 'humanitarian aid' from South Africa, Portugal, Rhodesia, France and other elements who had defied Nigerian sovereignty and intervened on the side of the secession.

We believe that it is the duty of all men of goodwill to pledge solidarity with Nigeria in their declared aim expressed in the words of Major-General Gowon, Head of State.

> *. . . to assert the ability of the black man to build a strong, progressive and prosperous, modern State and to ensure respect, dignity and equality in the comity of nationa . . . .*

U.S. 'SOUL' MUSIC IN AFRICA

J.K. Obatala

Last November the Tanzanian government announced that it had outlawed 'Soul music' in Tanzania and would take immediate action against Soul night clubs that continued to ignore its decree. At first Nyerere's actions appeared to me to be a deliberate slap in the face to the Afro-Americans, alas, an indication that Tanzania was relapsing into a self-induced coma of ultra-reactionary nationalism similar to that which has characterised Ghana since the overthrow of the Nkrumah regime.

This explanation, however, proved insufficient. For there was still to be considered the somewhat incongruous fact that, while K.A. Busia had issued and ruthlessly executed an 'Alien Quit Order' uprooting thousands of Africans—some of whom were second-generation Ghanaians—from their home, not even he had tampered with the Soul Joints which are becoming increasingly popular in Ghana's urban centres. Nor has the Busia regime interfered with the record distributors who are doing a booming business in Afro-American music. What then, could have lead Julius Nyerere to take such a radical step as the abolition of Black American music? The answer was not far to be sought.

One evening during the Christmas Holidays when I had decided to stay in my room and read rather than go into Accra, I was repeatedly interrupted by pandemonious outbursts coming from the students' lounge. This, of course, was not unusual and I knew it meant that James Brown was making another of his frequent appearances on Ghanaian television.

In the past I'd been preoccupied with my research and had never bothered to go over; this time, however, having caught up with my work at the beginning of the break, I decided to go and see what it would be like to catch 'J.B.' in Africa.

The lounge was packed and James Brown was just concluding his rendition of 'When I Rule The World'. Then, out stepped a short Black figure with shiny white teeth, clutching a portable microphone in his hands: 'Start from the bottom and move to the top; that's the American way!' Glancing slyly out of the corner of his eyes—which tended to give his face a somewhat impious expression—the speaker went on to explain to his soul-struck audience how the Horatio Alger story was still a 'living reality' in American life and how hordes of formerly impoverished scions of the Americans were battling their way from the bottom to the top of the economic ladder. And as living proof of Black prosperity he called out the general manager of James Brown Enterprises along with J.B. himself, both of whom gave glorious testimony to the blessings bestowed upon them by Black Capitalism.

The Speaker—the host of the show—was none other than the Afro-American millionaire, comedian Nipsy Russell who is fond of doing back-to-Africa jokes which usually end with the punch line 'I don't wanna trade my Cadillac for no elephant'.

As the show went on, the camera slowly panned the audience, picking up the U.S. flag, along with clusters of bubas and Afro-styled heads, bobbing and weaving to the pulsating rhythm of 'It's Your Thing' done by Marva Whitney and the Famous Flames.

When the 'Nipsy Russell Show' came to an end, I felt as if I had been given a one hour lecture by Julius Nyerere himself on 'Why I banned Soul Music From Tanzania'! For what I had just seen was a visual illustration of the destructive uses to which Afro-American music is being put in Africa. Indeed, the 'Nipsy Russell Show' was nothing less than a visualized myth, namely the Myth of Afro-American Affluence which is widespread in Africa and which carries with it some serious implications for the future of Africa itself as well as for relations between Africans and Afro-Americans. Moreover, **for the African, the myth need not even be visualised because it is inherent in his interpretation of another equally destructive myth, that of 'Soul' which is manifested in Afro-American music itself whether recorded, live, or experienced visually through the medium of television.**

The Myth of Afro-American Affluence is based largely on the fallacy of over generalisation: 'Afros' (as we are called) live in America, which is a rich country, therefore all Afros must be rich. Otherwise, goes the myth, how could they live such an out'a sight life with their bushy hair styles, way out fashions, swinging music and wild dances?

Due to the propagation of the Myth of Afro-American Affluence, Black poverty, oppression and exploitation in the United State's is inconceivable to the average African. To him Soul symbolizes affluence, not oppression. He does not understand the escapist and reactionary nature of the Soul myth because he cannot accept the fact that there is anything to escape from in America. Moreover, most English speaking Africans–not to mention illiterates and those who speak other European languages–cannot understand Afro-American dialect when spoken rapidly; the content and meaning of the music thus escapes them.

For the African then, Soul is the affirmation of the good life in America, not a cultural reflection of the long years of suffering inflicted upon his fellow African brothers in a strange and distant land. Indeed, the mere mention of the word conjures in his mind a thousand images of luxury and wealth, not the least of which is James Brown sliding over super slick-floors, flinging off one diamond studded cape after another.

This naive conception of Afro-American life has given rise to a sociological phenomenon which can be accurately termed an 'Afro-Quake'. Everything Afro-American, or that is believed to be Afro-American, is almost sure to go over big. Our dance, dress, and certain of our mannerisms are being widely imitated. A popular night club here in Accra called the 'Tiptoe' sells fried meat on sticks which it calls 'Afro-Khababs'. The young teenage waiters who serve it even have the name stenciled across the front of their sweat-shirts. I was literally swept from my feet when, not long ago, a brother (jokingly, thank goodness!) called me a 'Jive Time Nigger' and held out his hand for me to tighten him up on the issue! Moreover, many businesses, irrespective of what it is that they are selling, find it profitable to include the prefix 'Afro' in the title of their establishments; thus: 'Afro-Clothes', 'Afro-Food', 'Afro-Wigs', etc. Needless to say, the hustlers are probably having a field day and I wouldn't be at all surprised if someone tried to sell me some 'Afro-Grass' or an 'Afro-prophylactic'!

The current Afro fad however, is not rooted in any genuine understanding and appreciation of the historical, political, and economic ties that bind us and make us a common people with one destiny. The Afro buffs know much about James Brown and Otis Redding but little concerning the ideas and historical importance of great Black men such as Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, Blyden and Elijah Muhammed-let alone the African Diaspora and the international machinations of imperialism. To be sure, many

Africans in the bush have oral traditions which speak of 'sons across the sea' and Herskovits found that the Dahomeans even sacrificed a lamb to our 'safe return' each year. But the current sociological phenomenon which is sweeping Western Africa is more concerned with what is believed to be our way of life than with us as a people. It is due more to the popularity of Soul music and its implied myth of Black Affluence than to the prevalence of any widespread historical and political consciousness; more to the influence of American propaganda than to the writings of great African and Afro-American intellectuals such as Blyden, DuBois and Kwame Nkrumah.

Soul and Myth of Afro-American Affluence are thus the dual epicentre of our current wave of popularity in Africa. But the Afro-American has nothing for which to be proud. For all indications are that when the hot molten sounds of Black American music have cooled and crystalised, Africa will come down from its Soul Trip to find one great igneous extrusion stretching from the Drakensberg Mountains in the South to the Atlas in the North: that being American economic imperialism.

The effects are already visible from close up. A 45 rpm record which normally sells for 79¢ to 95¢ in the U.S. sells for $2.00 and up here. A James Brown album which sells for $3.98 in the States goes for anywhere from $10.00 to $19.00, and a $30.00 cadet tape recorder starts at around $100.00 and up. (This, of course is chicken-feed in comparison with the big time dough Kaiser Aluminium and other capitalist profiteers are ripping off from Africa with the aid of corrupt and self-seeking politicians..)

Yet unless the course of political events here in Ghana and the rest of West Africa is radically altered, this is only a sample of what is yet to come. For Africa's Soul Set–'Jet Set' if you will–are not only the largest purchasers of radios and televisions, but they are also the leaders of tomorrow. It is they, for example, who will determine if the London Rhodesian Company ('Lon-rho') shall retain its dirt cheap monopoly of the Ashanti Gold Fields, which was secretly signed by the National Liberation Council before it was dissolved. English and American propagandists have not taken this fact lightly. Indeed, they continuously bombard the dormitories, cafeterias, dining halls, canteens–in fact, anywhere there is a radio and people to listen–with 'Soul Sounds', interspersed with periodic, lopsided news broadcasts and other programmed propaganda. Both the target and the victims of this communications gimmickry are the young educated elite–mainly students, teachers, professional and civil service workers–who are most susceptible to the Myth of Afro-American Affluence. And it is they as well who, because of their economic status, are best able and most likely to adopt what they consider the basic patterns of Afro-American life. Thus if a person from the Black community of Los Angeles, for example, was blind-folded and taken to Saint Nitouche's in Accra, it would probably be some time before he realised that he was in Africa, rather than at Maverick's Flat or some other night spot in L.A.'s Grenshaw District.

But is Africa's new Soul Set really identifying with Black people in America? Or are they simply grasping for what is essentially American through the emulation of its Black population? To put it in more anthropological terms, is the current 'Afro' craze in Africa derived from a sense of brotherhood with fellow Africans abroad or is this simply young elitist Africa's way of 'snatching' for what it believes is its capitalist future? Indeed America is the Godhead of modern capitalism; the meaning of this for the African, especially the pro-elite student sector in the non-socialist countries such as Ghana and Ivory Coast, is that he cannot separate the fact that we dance and sing 'soulfully' from the fact that we dance and sing 'soulfully' in America. In his estimate, it is because we are in America, because we are–so he is led to believe—participants in its 'affluent society' that we are able to live such a carefree, in a word, 'Soulful' life.

In Africa then, the concept of Soul has become impregnated with the ideological germs of capitalism. The Afro-American life style thus symbolizes a capitalist heaven. Consequently, an 'Afro' is not a long lost brother to be welcomed home, nor is he viewed as the tragic figure which, in fact, he is. The 'Afro' is, instead, an ideal type: an image liberated from the object of its origin, so as not to be polluted or distorted by concrete reality. Afro-Americans are therefore to be idealised from afar, to be emulated as far as dress and dance is concerned, to be seen with on occasion: but not to be trusted! Their ideas are too radical; they are too militant, too much for rapid change, too anti-American and furthermore, they don't understand! Beneath it all, however, what really disturbs the African elite about the Afro-American viewed from close up is that it is forced to make a choice between the image as reflected in the Myth of Afro-American Affluence and the concrete object with all of its psychological dents and bruises which belie the myth of a capitalist heaven in America. I have been approached on countless occasions by young high school and university students wishing to know about 'life in America', only to find that what they **really** wanted to know was how much money James Brown made or did he really have his own airplane. Usually, though certainly not always, when the conversation turned to the plight of the Afro-American masses or to Africa itself, signs of boredom set in and my curious brothers suddenly discover that there is some place else they should have been at that time!

One of the problems is that Africa's new Soul Set, mainly the non-socialist elite, views the Afro-American stereotype of today as the African of tomorrow. There can therefore be no tampering with the Myth of Afro-American Affluence, by Afro-Americans themselves or anyone else. For this is tantamount to interfering with his future as he sees it and the elitest African will brook no resistance in his fanatical quest for a capitalist tomorrow. Moreover, he will hear nothing of sacrifice and struggle, not to mention socialism or a dictatorship of the proletariat; it's freedom, wigs, foreign aid, Mercedes and democracy for him and poverty and oppression for the masses who can neither vote, read, wear wigs nor drive a Volkswagen, let alone a Mercedes.

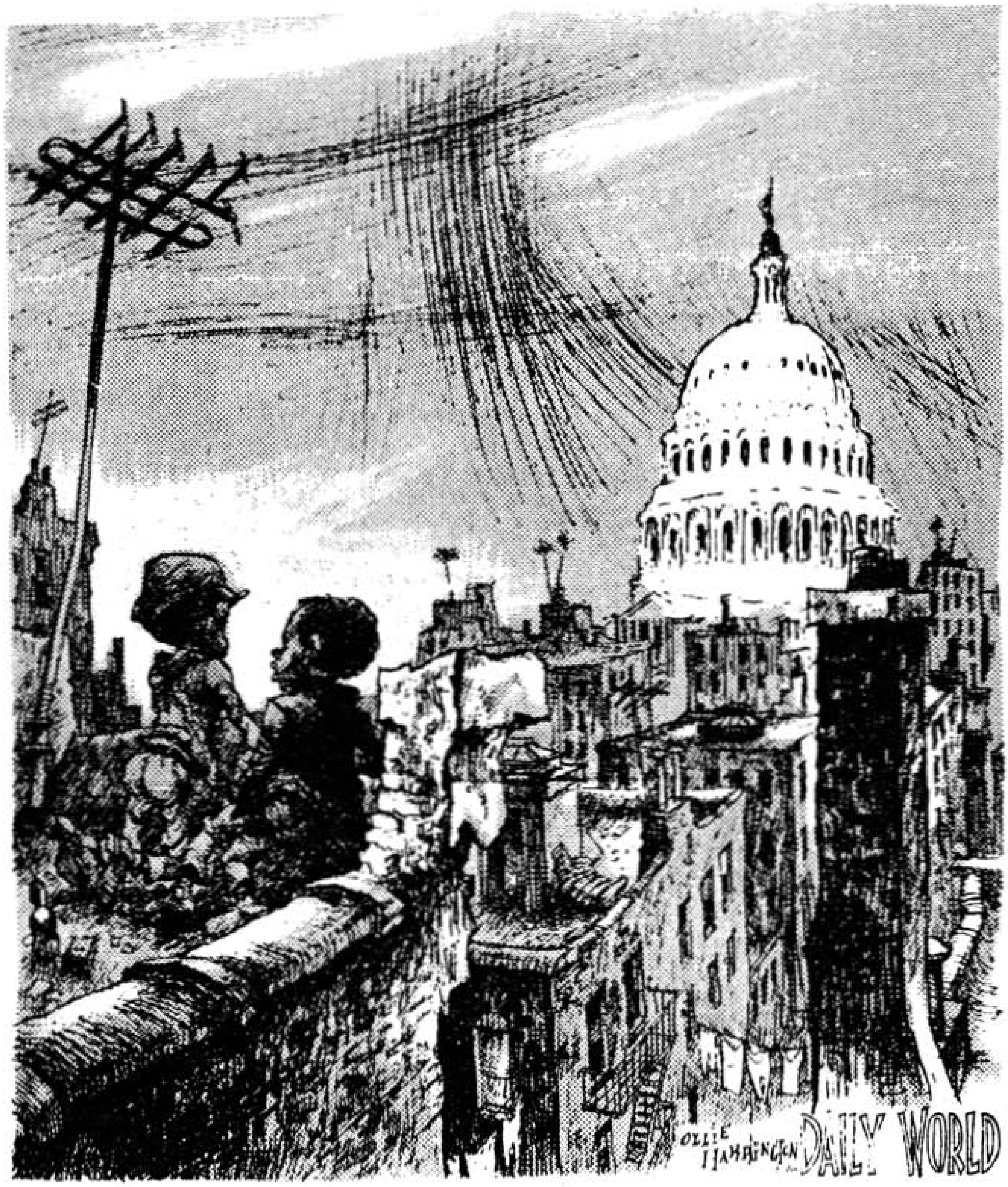
Yet everyone, the oppressor and the oppressed, the rich and the poor, can relate to soul music. Dealing mainly with love and sex, it is politically neutral, if not downright passive and submissive (e.g. Blues), while at the same time, the simple and uncomplicated rhythm appeals to the mass mind. Like alcohol and drugs, Soul music is a psychological depressant and at the same time, hallucinatory. Not only does it demand total involvement, but its monotonous rhythm is hypnotic, inducing a state of blissful euphoria which releases one's inhibitions and at the same time retards the thinking process.

Soul music therefore creates and thrives in an anti-intellectual atmosphere. This is true in the ghettos of America as well as Africa. In America, however, there has developed in recent times a semi-progressive trend in Soul music as reflected in the recordings of the Impressions, Johnnie Taylor and a few other artists who have managed to break away from the masochistic tradition of Afro-American music. But even this mild progressivism is neutralized in the African context because the English language has not been mastered well enought to understand Afro-American dialect. So there remains only the physical and emotional involvement with the rhythms, leaving the intellect untouched.

It is no wonder then, that the ultra-conservative Busia regime of Ghana—in spite of the fact that the country is now experiencing a resurgence of traditionalism—with its pro-American bent, has not tampered with its Soul Joints. For it is better for people to do the Boogaloo than think about the endless problems with which the country is faced; or, to put it more bluntly, it is better to have them release their frustrations on the dance floor than against the regime. Moreover, the hallucinatory nature of Soul music, along with the whole atmosphere of fantasy and romanticism in which the Soul Set (Cult) moves, provides a convenient medium through which the non-socialist elite can enter its capitalist tomorrow with a minimum of sacrifice and effort. The wigs, the Afro style clothes, the natural hair, the Soul night clubs: this, in the mind of the elite, is capitalist America via Black America.

Yet, and this point cannot be overstressed, it is from this Soul Set that non-socialist Africa (mainly Western Africa) must choose its future leaders. It is they for example, who will determine whether or not Kaiser Aluminium shall maintain its lily-white segregated community at Tema in Ghana or whether the same company can continue to import raw material from the West Indies to be processed in Ghana's smelter when the country has one of the largest bauxite deposits in the world. The point is that the abolition of the kind of economic exploitation and blatant political abuse that is reflected in the Kaiser contract with Ghana requires a firm and impeccable ideological commitment: a commitment to the idea that Africa and its resources are for the benefit of the African people, not the maintenance of a self-seeking elite. It is doubtful as to whether or not non-socialist Africa's new Soul Set can meet this challenge. For Soul, like its African forerunners, 'Negritude', 'African Socialism' and the 'African Personality', is an ideological anti-Christ. Its mystic nature renders it void of analytical and critical content and the carefree, party-all-the-time atmosphere in which it thrives militates against the ideas of sacrifice and struggle.

Posing the progressive regime of Julius Nyerere against the reactionary Busia Government then, we can understand very well why the former should move to ban Soul music from Tanzania and eradicate its regressive influences from among a people who are striving to build a socialist society: a task which demands that problems not be covered up, rationalised and turned away from, but exposed and tackled head on, utilising the collective will and intellect of all the people.



"WHEN THE WIND IS RIGHT YOU CAN SMELL THE FINE EATIN' THEY'RE DOIN' UP THERE. BUT IT MOSTLY AIN'T RIGHT."

BOOK REVIEWS

INDEFATIGABLE BASIL DAVIDSON

The Africans: An Entry to Cultural History by Basil Davidson.
Longmans, 50s.

The latest book of the indefatigable Basil Davidson, is remarkable as much for what it implies as for its content. It is based on the assumption that for most non-Africans, Africa is still a Dark Continent full of Dark People with Dark Purposes who are very different from other peoples. As he himself says in an introductory note:

> *That the Africans have a long and vivid history of their own is now widely understood. But what manner of history has this been? Here I have attempted three things. First, to offer a summary of what is now known, or what it now seems reasonable to think, about the ideas and social systems, religions, moral values, magical beliefs, arts and metaphysics of a range of African peoples, chiefly in tropical Africa. Then to consider the ways in which these cultures have grown and changed from distant times until now. Lastly to fit these aspects of African civilisation into their modern perspective as the connected parts of a living whole.*

In a world shot through with racial prejudice and conflict, no one can doubt the need to dispel the ignorance which is the cause of so much misunderstanding between peoples of different skin colours and historical and cultural backgrounds. The more different peoples know of one another, the more they realise they are very much the same, and belong to the same great human family, that there is more to unite them than to divide them . This, after all, is the logic recognised by the racist as much as by the humanist, though the courses of action they propose to follow may be totally opposed. The Nationalist Government of South Africa follows the policy of apartheid precisely because it wants to prevent the intermingling of peoples, and crucial to its present social system is the fact that it has not one unifying department of education for all South Africans, but four separate departments for the four main racial groupings. White ignorance of Black South Africa is almost total. Few Whites know African languages, or are acquainted with African history or culture, and the opportunites for social contact between the races are deliberately reduced by Government decree to the irreducible minimum.

Nothing has been quite so depressing as to witness the great debate in Afrikaans student circles in recent years over the desirability of entering into any form of dialogue with Non-White students. Finally, the Afrikaanse Studentebond, the national organisation of Afrikaans students, endorsed the principle of contact—but only on an official level between Whites representing Whites and Non-Whites representing Non-Whites, and in furtherance of the overall policy of segregation. Whites should only meet Non-Whites, in other words, in order to discuss how to separate themselves more completely in future.

It is because the attitude of the Studentebond is by no means exclusive to Afrikaner Nationalists, and is in fact shared by large numbers of people of all races in all parts of the world, that Basil Davidson's book is so welcome at this time. 'Old views about Africa', he says—that the Africans are primitive barbarians with no history or culture, totally different from civilised man—'still retain a kind of underground existence.' The sediment of reactionary attitudes

> *has settled like a layer of dust and ashes on the minds of large numbers of otherwise thoughtful people, and is constantly being swirled about. What this leads to, despite all factual evidence to the contrary, are endless suspicions that writers such as Lothrop Stoddard were or are just possibly right when they wrote or write about the 'natural and inherent inferiority' of Africans; that 'in the negro, we are in the presence of a being differing profoundly not merely from the white man but also from (other) human types'; or that 'the negro . . . . has contributed virtually nothing' to the civilisation of the world. However scientifically mistaken, these notions apparently remain part of our culture.*

Davidson points to the class origin of such attitudes.

> *Often it is the aggressive violence of such opinions that most*

> *surprises. But perhaps one ought not to be surprised. These notions arose essentially from an identification of categories of 'race' and 'class'. Outside their comfortable windowpanes Victorian men of property saw the hateful Devil of a new proletariat, hungry, abused, always liable to strike; and they feared what they saw. At another remove they viewed the Africans in the same obscuring light: as beings of 'the lower orders' whom civilisation, if it were to survive, must keep sternly 'in their place'. They accordingly tended to think of Africans not only as children incapable of growing up, but as dangerous and potentially criminal children. All but a few agreed that these 'natives' could not safely be admitted to the salons of human equality.*

Both attitudes are, of course, combined in the minds of the white supremacists of Southern Africa.

The recent work of historians and anthroplogists, says Davidson,

> *has helped to erase the impression of 'otherness'. It now becomes clear that Africans have developed in ways recognisably the same as other peoples. Individually, or collectively, they have arranged their lives on the same basic assumptions, whether of logic or morality, as everyone else. The forms have been as different as Africa is different from Europe, Asia or America: but not the principles of intelligence and apprehension, not the essential content. What comes out is the picture of a complex and subtle process of growth and change behind and within the technological simplicities of former times. The societies still partially observable yesterday, and even today after the storm-driven erosions of colonial rule, were and are the terminal structures of an ancient evolution. To borrow a phrase applied by Grottanelli to the arts of Africa, they are to be seen not as points of departure but as points of arrival.*

Davidson then surveys the nature of the traditional African society, the manner in which it was formed, the beliefs and practices which held it together, enabled it to meet the demands of its natural environment and to balance the tensions which grew inside the society itself as it changed and developed. He discusses the extended family system which lay at the heart of African political and social structure, the function of 'age sets' and secret societies, the role of witches and sorcerers in helping to bring harmony to the theory and practice of the African peoples. He shows that African beliefs are not arbitrary inventions but are strictly related to the realities of African society, that art is not capricious and individualistic but socially motivated, that the whole of African society 'rested upon an imperative morality'. Each stage of development was produced by a reconciling of contradictions in the old societies in such a way that the new retained the best elements of the old, while discarding what was outmoded.

The great kingdoms of Africa may at first glance seem to be far removed from the egalitarianism of the primitive communes. But, says Davidson, 'these kingships may be thought to have realised their full potential within the possibilities of traditional culture. Strong in their ancestral framework, they presided over much that was ingenious and brilliant. They partook fully in the life and vigour of African civilisation. They helped to clothe this civilisation in luminous diversities of custom and appearance'. The African clan structure, with its combination of authority and democracy, still lay at the core of the most extended social system.

Naturally, crises developed in African society from time to time under the impact of new forces. Growth of population and hunger, trade, produced in their wake conquest and assimilation. The development of new crafts led to social stratification. Sometimes the contradictions, internal and external, to which African society was subjected were so strong that they resulted in a radical departure from the norm, a distortion of the traditional modes of operation which only a new upheaval could correct. Davidson argues that the crisis of modern Africa did not open with the advent of imperialism, but that traditional African society was already beginning to break down the middle of the 19th century—before the great carve-up of the continent took place.

The ancestral social charters which had made change possible in the past might well have been set to work again.

> *New systems were needed if Africa was to sustain its growth, or even its independence, in a world of radical economic and social change . . . But meanwhile the old systems were powerless to meet the brusque and rending challenge of industrial production.*
>
> *The time required to make this hard transition of structures from one world to another was not to be available. There came instead the shattering arrival of the Europeans whose colonial impact and presence, prolonged over 60 or 70 years, made more tinkering impossible. Africans thereafter continued to adjust and evolve, even in the cultural suffocation of the 'settler colonies'; but not until the present day, and now in situations rootedly different from any in the past, having gone through much and*

> *learned much, could they begin to approach their basic problems of systematic change.*

Because the imperialists had destroyed African self-government and the social fabric which sustained it, independence has so far failed to provide the African peoples with acceptable solutions to the problems which confront them. The book concludes by posing the questions which still have to be answered: How bridge the gap between the ruling elite and the masses? How do small states with non-viable economies survive? How develop from monoculture to industrialisation? How accumulate the capital for development? How cope with the rapid growth of population? Davidson makes no attempt to provide the answers.

> *In the end it will be a matter of knowing how the civilisation of the past can be remade by a new and bold vision. The Africans sorely need their modern revolution: profound and far-reaching in creative stimulus, unleashing fresh energies, opening new freedoms. The world's experience may help. But the structures that are needed will have to stand on their own soil. Perhaps this is only another way of saying that these new structures, as and when they emerge, will be nourished by the vigour and resilience of native genius, by all the inheritance of self-respect and innovating confidence that has carried these peoples through past centuries of change and cultural expansion.*

A glance at Basil Davidson's notes and references, as well as his bibliography, shows that he has done his homework thoroughly, and has read just about everything that has been written by the social anthropologists and historians whose conclusions he is synthesising. He informs us that he has submitted his manuscript to and received advice from a number of experts. His survey is balanced and authoritative, as indeed anyone acquainted with his past work would expect.

Neverthless, ranging over an enormous territory, Davidson has had to be selective. He illustrates a general argument with a reference to one or another country, this or that aspect of cultural development, various periods of history. To this reviewer he appears, as a result, (a) to be operating at one remove from reality, so that one sees Africa somewhat blurred by a curtain of words; and (b) to be compelled always to treat Africa as a unity, to discuss it as though whatever happens to any part of it must also happen to the whole.

The most insidious consequence of this mode of treatment is one that the author probably least desires—to perpetuate the notion of

African separateness and difference. Davidson ends his book with the assumption that 'Africa' will respond to the challenge of the modern world in an 'African' way, just as he discusses the experience of independence in various African countries as if they all suffered from the same defects.

The role of imperialism both in the pre-independence and the post-independence era is inadequately examined. The failure of many of the new African states to create a stable and viable social system is regarded largely as a subjective weakness, and not equally as a consequence of continuing interference and domination of the continent and its resources by the imperialists through all the mechanisms of neo-colonialism. The renewal of Africa in the future will not be purely a process of African regeneration, but will be the fruit of a sustained and continuing struggle, both between the contending groups and classes within each African state, and between the forces of liberation in each African state and foreign imperialism. In this struggle it is to be hoped that the various African people and states will ultimately find that there is more to unite than to divide them. But this cannot be assumed purely on the basis of their Africanness. Just as one cannot speak of 'Europe' any longer as a political or social entity because it is split from top to bottom by class and struggle and cold war, so one will be less and less able to speak of 'Africa' as it more and more becomes the theatre of struggle of contending national and world forces.

The concept of the 'third world' is not valid in the sphere of politics, since there can be no neutrality on the human battlefield where all men of all countries fight for a better life. It is time to examine more specifically how African countries have differed and are more and more diverging in the course of this struggle, developing their own distinctive personalities which one cannot properly perceive or analyse if one keeps on talking of them all merely as 'Africans'. No doubt there was a time for this in the past, even the recent past. But has not the time come to dispel the prejudice, which may even be unwittingly fostered by this book, that 'they all look the same'?

After all, Africa is not encapsulated either geographically or temporally, and most African countries and peoples have had strong and binding links with non-African countries and peoples (as indeed Mr. Davidson shows) sometimes for centuries. But because their circumstances were different, not all African countries and peoples have reacted in the same way to similar stimuli. South Africans, for example, have in the last 200 years had quite different experiences from Africans in Ghana or the Sudan, and this is reflected not only in the modifications which have taken place in their philosophy and religion, but also in the structure and ideology of their political organisations. Similarly, a Malawi under Dr. Banda and a Lesotho under Chief Leabua Jonathan have chosen different allies from an Egypt under Nasser or a Tanzania under Julius Nyerere. These differences are not due to the whims of individuals, but to the different points of balance reached by all the diverse forces at work in each of the various societies of Africa. Is it not more important now to examine why Africans have taken different paths, and to cogitate on the implications and possibilities for the future?

Nobody is so well equipped as Mr. Davidson to do this job. His little book 'The Liberation of Guine' got more beneath the skin of Africa; it firmly wields together theory and practice. By contrast **The Africans**, unanchored, floats freely in space and time, brilliant and multi-faceted, but elusive and, yes, in the long run unsatisfying.

Z.N.

GUINEA – BISSAU

The Liberation of Guine by Basil Davidson, Penguin, 6s
Revolution in Guinea: Selected texts by Amilcar Cabral, Stage 1, 9s

The fog of colonialism which for so long polluted the skies of Africa, screening her history and culture from her own people and from the world, has almost blown clear. The belching chimneys of imperialist propaganda are being throttled by the African revolution. Few historians of this period will survive the scrutiny of free Africa as successfully as Basil Davidson. In this memorable book he recounts the making of history in Guine Bissau, or as he terms it, 'the return to history of the Guinean people'. With perspicacious eye, physical courage–he gathered his information from the front line of struggle–and the fervour of one sharply committed to the liberation movement he describes, Davidson pays tribute to the long years and hard clear thinking that have brought victory so close to the Guinean people. Without romance or rhetoric, without resort to vacuous phraseology, he traces step by step the development of the struggle from its tiny clandestine beginnings in 1956 to the now massive, unified and victory-seeking final phases. His account, pulsating with poignant descriptions of his travels–crisscrossing the country on foot with PAIGC fighters: conversing through the crump of Portuguese bombs–is presented within a framework of eight questions each designed to probe and reveal for his reader the Why?, How?, Who? and When? of the fight for the liberation of Guine.

The heroes of Davidson's story are the men and women of PAIGC under the command of Amilcal Cabral, whose outstanding individual qualities and astute leadership have undoubtedly been a major, perhaps decisive, factor in advancing the Guinean revolution. The selection of Cabral's major statements and speeches spanning the period of armed struggle, 1961-1969 bears witness to a deep and certain knowledge of his country and people and a positive genius for prosecuting the struggle for their liberation. He has been convinced from the outset that, while it is necessary to learn from the struggles of other peoples, the actions of his party should always be based squarely on the objective conditions within Guine itself, thus avoiding the pitfalls of a mechanical application of theories derived from the experience of others. At the same time he and his party have been determined that Guinean liberation should be real and not token. Having witnessed the failure of so many African states who after independence fell willy-nilly into the neo-colonial quagmire, Cabral lays great stress on the revolutionary character of PAIGC's policy. The party's programme is undoubtedly one of the most far-reaching and socialist oriented documents to emerge from the African liberation scene.

As with our own struggle in South Africa the PAIGC's decision to take up arms was not easily made. Only after utterly exhausting the possibilities for peaceful change—no matter how unlikely they seemed—was it decided to prepare for war. Nor was it calculated that there would be a spontaneous, ready for revolution, rising of the people. It was recognised that the new form of struggle, once launched, would demand great sacrifices and could only succed on the basis of mass support won through conviction that a better life was in the offing. Davidson describes how the PAIGC patiently set about persuading the people that in order to improve their lot warfare was necessary but that it was not sufficient to simply chase out the Portuguese and raise a flag with new colours.

> *'f there had to be warfare, it was to be for revolutionary ends . . . to make the revolt worthwhile, even to make it possible its objectives had to go far beyond a substitution of the persons in control . . . to a total reform of structure at every level of life. Only then would PAIGC policies be able to answer the interests of the peasants, and the sufferings be accepted as a price that could be paid.*

The years of preparation between 1956 and 1960 resulted in a task force of 1000 cadres (ironically enough drawn mainly from the traditionally unstable petty bourgeois class) who after special training in the neighbouring Republic of Guinea were fed back into the countryside. There followed 3 years of fierce, often frustrating, propaganda work among the peasants who, unlike the classic monolith class from textbooks, were in the nature of their exploitation by the colonial administration, and in culture, as diverse and full of surprises as the landscape which they work and shape.

The key to the outstanding success of the Guine revolution lies in the PAIGC's unrelenting effort to mobilise the peasant masses on the basis of a clear and detailed understanding of their needs with a style of propaganda free from dogmatic assertions and generalised slogans. The people were encouraged to discover for themselves the need for armed struggle and, through their involvement in the struggle, party promises were seen to be fulfilled; the benefits of collective and anti-elitist principles and practices became apparent to all through the conduct of the military campaign and through the day to day realisation of improved economic conditions and a democratic way of life.

There are very many lessons to be learnt from the struggle in Guine. Their struggle is of profound importance in the broader context of African liberation. But it is from the everyday experiences of building their revolution, dealing with problems which are endemic to all liberation struggles, that we must look to the PAIGC for an example. In political terms the struggle for Guine promises further confirmation of the Leninist prediction that the road to socialism does not always need to be hacked through the jungle of capitalism. In terms of Africa, the indications are that Guine will provide the clearest yet vindication of this theory.

The successes of the PAIGC's effort in purely military terms can be easily judged from the map of Guine which shows at present the Portuguese forces contained in, and confined to, small heavily defended enclaves surrounded by oceans of liberated countryside As in Vietnam the front line of the struggle is increasingly being carried forward into the urban areas.

Despite heavy losses, huge costs and impending defeat the Portuguese continue to pour troops into Guine. Their commitment, in proportion to population already rivals that of the U.S. in Vietnam. The blackshirts in Lisbon can see the writing on the wall but at the same time they recognise the fatal consequences the loss of Guine would have, not only on the beleaugred garrisons of their own crumbling empire but also on the racist outposts of South Africa and

Rhodesia. The struggle waged by the PAIGC demonstrates the power of the African people, weakens the imperialist foothold in Africa, and gives inspiration and added strength to those engaged in warfare in the south. The inevitable victory of the PAIGC spells doom to the oppressors of Angola and Mozambique and without the guns of their fascist cousin, Smith and Vorster can count their days. If we are to judge by these two illuminating accounts of the Guine struggle, that time is not too far off. Indeed, for Guine it seems just around the corner.

S.W.

THE AFRICAN REVOLUTION

La Revolution En Afrique, Problems et Perspectives By Joao Mendes. (Preface by Jean Suret-Canale).

Revolution in Africa, Problems and Perspectives by Joao Mendes ranges widely over the situation in the continent of Africa. It deals primarily with problems of the carrying forward of the national liberation struggle from political independence and the battle in Southern Africa to overthrow colonial and white minority rule.

As a Marxist and an African, with a thorough grasp of the present day features of the national liberation struggle and its relation to the fight for socialism, Joao Mendes understands the necessity for a historical view of Africa's situation. The first section of his book is, therefore, devoted to a historical examination of the continent, its social structures, its political and cultural achievements before the arrival of the European exploiters. He moves on to describe the impact of the explorations of the European navigators, the growth of the slave trade, the division of the continent by the imperialist powers and the tragedy of colonialism.

The drawing of Africa into the orbit of the world capitalist system and the effect on the African peoples' subsequent development, culminating in the struggle for national independence are very clearly outlined.

The major problems now faced by African revolutionaries in the independent states arise, as he sees it, from the fact that Africa has not reached the necessary level of social development to enable the countries to pass in one leap from national independence to the full liberation of their societies from imperialist domination. Consequently from this there flows the tensions within some of the new African states between the elitist leaders who collaborate with the imperialists and their peoples who press forward for a better life. In other states where the leaders, parties and peoples are struggling to advance from independence to liberation, there is instability with the danger of military coups and counter-revolutions. He shows how imperialism produces a constant flow of confusing theories to divert the African peoples from a real understanding of their present position and what steps are necessary to take them to their next stage of their revolution.

In the final chapter of this section, he devotes considerable attention to outlining the concept of the non-capitalist path, (though arguing that it should more appropriately be called the 'anti-capitalist' path) as the intermediate stage through which the African states with their problems of economic and social under development must pass in order to create the necessary material and political pre-conditions for the beginning of the construction of socialism.

The second section, 'Africa and Its Problems' deals with the struggle of the liberation movement in Southern Africa and its confrontation, not only with white racist and Portuguese rule, but with the collective efforts of the giant monopoly firms which operate on a vast international scale, and on whose behalf the imperialist governments act.

It is these same imperialist forces which through the methods of neo-colonialism create the basis for the disunity and dissension between the independent African states themselves. Mendes devotes considerable attention to the Organisation of African Unity and its positive achievement in drawing the African states together, in the development of an organisational structure based on a statement of common aims. He also stresses that many states, while paying lip service to these aims and the requirements of the Organisation, sabotage them in practice. All-African Unity, as he repeatedly points out, corresponds to the present and future requirements of the African peoples, but its attainment is retarded by the role of those new African states which have become the satellites of imperialist powers, often of the former colonial rulers. It is relations with imperialism which essentially differentiate the African states, one group subjected to neo-colonialism, the other carrying forward the liberation struggle and taking their place in the world wide anti-imperialist movement alongside the socialist world system and the working class and progressive forces of the capitalist world.

> *The progressive governments base themselves on the nationalist forces including the honest traditional chiefs, revolutionary intellectuals, rural and urban workers, traders, farmers and craftsmen, all these sections allied in a common aim; to defend the national interest and combat foreign exploitation. The countries dependent on imperialism occupy a diametrically opposite posi-*

> *tion: a capitalist class is developing, their primitive accumulation of capital coming from their abuse of public funds and by the sale of national assets to the international monopolies.*(page 101. trans. J.B.).

Section three deals with 'Africa and the Contemporary Revolution'. It is one of the great strengths of this work that the author firmly grasps the relationship between the revolution in the African continent and the world revolutionary process; the significance of the socialist world system for the revolution elsewhere and the urgent need for the maximum unity of the world anti-imperialist front.

He urges African revolutionaries to grasp this fundamental aspect of the contemporary world in which they work and struggle and to reject the false theories which abound but which will mislead. He selects for special attention theories which deny the existence of classes in Africa, and the leading role of the working class and assert that the African working class is corrupted by imperialism. He deals with armed struggle and shows the danger of elevating it into a mystical solution to all the acute and complex problems of defeating imperialist domination and constructing new societies.

In addition the book touches on many other important questions such as the role of ideology in Africa today and the problem of creating disciplined, revolutionary political parties united by scientific socialist ideas in societies where the working class is small and relatively inexperienced.

The difficulties and complexities of the situation in Africa for revolutionaries are squarely faced, the setbacks, the instability and the dangers are discussed, but the writer's understanding of the processes of social change enable him to see beyond them and to advance revolutionary policies to meet them. He sees, correctly, the national liberation movement in its national and democratic content as an essential and organic part of the world proletarian revolution and the challenge to the African revolutionary arising from the contradiction between 'the development reached by the revolutionary forces and the advanced political content of the revolutionary struggle on a world scale'. *(page 216. trans. J.B.)*

The wide variety of problems discussed in this book and the clear enunciation of general Marxist principles relating to national liberation will be of assistance in providing a sound base from which Africa's fighters for liberation will be able to move to examine in detail the problems of their own individual countries.

Joan Bellamy.

MONDLANE'S MOZAMBIQUE

The Struggle for Mozambique by Eduardo Mondlane, Penguin, 85s

It is now more than a year since Comrade Eduardo Mondlane, the late President of FRELIMO, was assasinated by a bomb sent through the post. His book was published posthumously.

The Struggle for Mozambique is divided into two parts. The first section deals with life under Portuguese colonial rule, analysing and exposing the myths with which Portugal has surrounded herself to justify her presence in Africa, and replacing them with the cold facts of oppression and exploitation which were and are the daily lot of the people of Mozambique. One after another the legends are demolished—the colonial 'tradition', the 'civilising mission' of the Portuguese, the 'multi-racialism'.

What emerges is a picture of a small and weak European country which, even before this century, was only able to maintain its colonial possessions by courtesy of the other Western powers then engaged in the scramble for Africa. After the Treaty of Berlin in 1884 Portugal began pacifying the territories allotted to her, but was unable single-handed to embark on her programme of exploitation of the natural wealth of Mozambique; huge areas of land were leased out to foreign-owned companies. Thus, in spite of the isolationist policies pursued by Salazar after 1926 (until he was forced by economic pressures to abandon them in the 1950's), it is clear that Portugal has never lacked the support of Western capital that she enjoys today.

An outstanding feature of the book is Monlane's appraisal of the social structures of Mozambique. He shows for example, how the Catholic church, in collaboration with the Fascist state machinery, has controlled an educational programme designed to produce a submissive and malleable African who will never question the system; he also exposes the 'assimilado' system, as a policy whose theory is based on racialism and paternalism. In this section, as throughout the book, quotations are tellingly used: contrast the school experience of a Mozambican—'After 1958 our parents even had to buy the hoes with which we cultivated the mission land'—with Bishop Pereira's 'The native people of Africa have the obligation to thank the colonialists for all the benefits which they receive from them', and 'The slogan "Africa for the Africans" is a philosophical monstrosity and a challenge to the Christian civilisation, because today's events tell us that it is

Communism and Islamism, which wish to impose their civilisation on the Africans.

But Africa is for the Africans, and the second half of *The Struggle for Mozambique* 'Towards independence', traces the growth of Mozambican nationalism from its roots in armed resistence at the end of the nineteenth century through the beginnings of political parties in the 1930s, to the formation of FRELIMO in 1962 and the development of today's struggle.

Under the fascist regime political freedom is denied even to the white population of metropolitan Portugal, and it is not surprising that African attempts to establish political parties, along lines developing elsewhere in the continent, have been ruthlessly suppressed. It was at an early stage of political formation that the path towards independence in the Portuguese colonies began to diverge radically from that of their neighbours. In Mozambique, as in Angola and Guine, there was still throughout the 1950s repeated efforts to achieve independence by constitutional means, and to express protest through the traditional methods of strikes, non violent demonstrations and so on, but political organisations had to work underground. The massacre at Meuda in northern Mozambique in 1960, when more than 500 people were shot down, was final proof of the futility of pacific action, and by the time FRELIMO was formed it was apparent that existing experience of underground organisation would have to be used in preparation for armed struggle.

FRELIMO faced many difficulties in its first years, and these are not glossed over. A major weakness of previous political parties, for example, had been their dependence on the urban elites, and their lack of real contact with the peasants who make up the vast majority of the population. A movement without firm roots in the countryside would not hope to succeed. The urban population of Mozambique is less than half a million strong, and of this number many would consider themselves peasants rather than a proletariat. Mondlane himself, classified on the blurb of the Penguin as a 'Negro intellectual', was brought up in the countryside herding goats until the age of 12.

The two years between 1962 and the launching of armed struggle in September 1964, therefore, were not just spent in military preparation. The worl of political education and mobilisation was seen as an essential part of the struggle, without which a war of liberation would have no meaning and could not be successful. Of course this is not a new discovery, but as in other situations FRELIMO was able to analyse ideas learned from the experience of others and adapt them to the conditions existing in Mozambique.

Mondlane's description of the development of the struggle on all fronts, the retreat of the Portuguese colonial army from substantial areas of the countryside, and the programme of social reconstruction undertaken in the liberated areas, leads up to the Second Congress of FRELIMO, held in the interior in June 1968. It was here that for the first time since the beginning of the war representatives of the people from every district of Mozambique were able to meet, to assess their work, to examine their achievements and setbacks, and to formulate policies for the future. The resolutions passed are printed in full, and are valuable as a landmark in the revolution. They show clearly the extent to which FRELIMO's policies have developed and matured through their own experience; these policies now form the basis on which the struggle is being carried forward and it is here, above all, that the contribution of Eduardo Mondlane must be seen in its true light.

In the words of a Congress resolution, FRELIMO is engaged in a struggle which is 'part of the world's movement for the emancipation of the peoples, which aims at the total liquidation of colonialism and imperialism, and at the construction of a new society free from exploitation of man by man'. The new society must be built slowly and painfully, with few resources and in a time of war, yet already the Mozambican people are beginning to achieve their goal. The forces ranged against them–the Unholy Alliance of Portugal with the white supremacist regimes of South Africa and Rhodesia, backed by the NATO alliance and Western capital, are not underestimated, but they cannot in the long run prevent the victory of a genuine people's war.

The situation in Mozambique has been changing rapidly during the struggle, and the ideas of the leaders develop to keep pace with events. It is clear from Mondlane's actions and statements during the last six months of his life that since he wrote the book new experiences had already been absorbed into his thought. We do not have the benefit of this in the book, but it is still a major contribution to the literature of revolution. It must now stand as a testimony to the life and work of one of Africa's outstanding leaders.

GG

AN INDIAN VIEW OF AFRICA

Reporting Africa by Anirudha Gupta. People's Publishing House, New Delhi. 1969.

The views of a progressive Indian journalist about Africa are bound to be interesting, especially when he is intelligent, well-read, and clearly committed to African independence, freedom from neo-colonialism and all-round economic advance. This book is therefore to be welcomed, subject to some important reservations mentioned below.

Mr. Gupta visited Africa in 1965/66. He went to the U.A.R.,Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia and Rhodesia, where he was declared a Prohibited Immigrant. His bibliography and thoughtful introduction show that he has read widely and given deep consideration to the problem of making African independence a reality. Although he nowhere refers to it, the experience of his own country in trying to transform agriculture, industrialise and develop without becoming hopelessly enmeshed as a small cog in the machinery of Western capitalism, over a longer period than Africa has yet experienced, makes his contribution more penetrating than one usually expects from outsiders who visit Africa and pontificate upon how its affairs should be run.

His book suffers the inevitable fate of journalistic writing about African events–it has been overtaken by events. The political crisis in Kenya leading to the suppression of the opposition KPU, and the events leading to the banning of the ANC in Zambia are two examples of important developments which have occurred since Mr. Gupta completed his manuscript. But such things do not entirely invalidate the chapters on these countries, because the author is prepared to look below the surface and examine the social forces and economic trends that underlie the political changes.

It is when Mr. Gupta comes face to face with the reality of white supremacy in the south, when his Indian experience is least relevant, that his judgement falters seriously. Writing at a time when it was still uncertain whether Smith would accept the 'Fearless' proposals which represented Wilson's final attempt to fall over backwards in pursuit of a settlement, the author places too much emphasis on the constitutional details, and fails to understand either the scope or the political significance of the guerilla struggle. He implies (p.231) that there is a military alliance between ANC, ZAPU and FRELIMO which may turn out to be correct as a long-term forecast, but certainly wasn't in existence in 1968. (FRELIMO in any case operates in Mozambique, not Angola). His discussion of the possible courses of future development in Rhodesia is academic and unreal: by giving consideration–even if only to dismiss it–to the possibility of Vorster welcoming a Banda-type regime in Rhodesia, he shows that he is unaware how far white South Africa is committed to the maintenance of apartheid throughout Southern Africa, and how profoundly advanced and irreversible are the ramifications of the Unholy Alliance in Africa's Deep South.

Such criticisms should not put off potential readers of this book. On other aspects of Africa, it is more realistic. And it has a very handy selection of documents reproduced in full, including the Arusha Declaration, the Kenyan white paper on African Socialism, Odinga's resignation statement, and important speeches by Nasser, Kaunda and Nyerere.

J.V.

GHANA UNDER NKRUMAH

Nationalism and Economic Development in Ghana by Roger Genoud. Praeger, 1969, £7.6.0.

Most Marxists would agree that an understanding of the Ghanaian experience is essential to an understanding of the path from national to social revolution in Africa. Yet, can it be truly said that Communists have understood Nkrumah's Ghana either in the past or today?

In the mid-1950s Nkrumah was seen as a representative of a rising African bourgeoisie (see Kartun, *Africa, Africa,* 1954). In the 1960s he was seen as a nascent scientific socialist intimately linked with the masses, with the CPP as a revolutionary-democratic party developing into a vanguard party, and Ghana well on the non-capitalist road of development (see Sloan: 'Ghana Without Illusions', *Political Affairs,* October 1966). And today, four years after the sudden and total collapse of his regime, we seem to be reproaching Nkrumah (in a tone more of sorrow than of anger) for not being as we had earlier described him! (see *African Communist,* No.34, pp 78-9, and No.39, pp.12-13).

The failure to come to terms with Nkrumah is evident. For what we have here is not Marxist analysis, developing and deepening as time passes, but a series of **positions**, adopted and dropped in pragmatic fashion, and without so much as a backward glance at the failure of our own analyses. The changing attitudes we took may have been inspired by changes in Ghana's diplomatic, political, economic and ideological orientation, but they were not based on a serious study of Ghana's social structure, the behaviour of the CPP, its economic and political strategy, for this was never made.

The absence of Communist analysis left a theoretical vacuum, so far filled only by young New Left social scientists such as the American Fanonists, Bob Fitch and Mary Oppenheimer *(Ghana - End of an Illusion*, 1966), their English critic, Roger Murray *('Second Thoughts on Ghana', New Left Review,* No.42, 1967), and an Indian, Jitendra Mohan ('Nkrumah and Nkrumaism', *Socialist Register,* 1967). To these goes the credit for raising the questions Communists have avoided: What was the sociological composition of Ghana and what role was played by the different groups within it? Did the CPP behave like a mass party or an instrument of the petty bourgeoisie? How and why did Ghana's orientation change in economics and politics? Did Nkrumaism bring scientific socialism closer to Ghana's masses or did it represent petty-bourgeois mystification? What lessons are to be drawn from this experience for socialist strategy in Africa?

Unfortunately, Fitch and Oppenheimer end up near Kartun (whilst suggesting that Nkrumah should have appealed to a scarcely existing urban and rural proletariat), Murray fails to escape from what he himself describes as the 'Cuban illusion' (that without violent revolution there was no way out of neo-colonial domination for Ghana), and Mohan's analysis amounts to adding 'petty- bourgeois' at frequent intervals to his useful description of the CPP. Despite the great value of these writers in opening locked doors, their analyses remain as partial as those mentioned earlier.

Finally, however, a work has appeared that seems to have overcome these partialities, re-working what was valid in the old Communist positions and answering the challenges raised by the New Left. Roger Genoud's *Nationalism and Economic Development in Ghana* makes no claim to Marxist orthodoxy (in fact no claim to be *Marxist*) yet manages to be more scientific (i (i.e. *Marxist*) than any work on Ghana's economy and politics under Nkrumah yet produced.

Genoud's fundamental thesis is simply this: that the Ghanaian experience is to be understood not in terms of **socialism** but of **de-colonialisation**:

> *The many questions which may be raised in this framework are of immediate relevance to Ghana, while those concerning socialism in an essentially pre-industrial former African colony are, to say the least, rather abstract. It would amount to looking at Ghana through an ideological – and, given the state of crisis of socialist theory at the moment, an essentially rhetorical – mirror, instead of looking at these fifteen years directly. (paras. 85-6).*

The economic situation of the colonial Gold Coast was such that the main contradiction was between the population as a whole and colonialism. This conflict of interest was sufficient, says Genoud, to create a basis for nationalism, but **not** for socialism. He sets out to prove this by examining the social structure of Ghana, the character of the CPP, the economic and political strategy of Nkrumah in different periods, and the ideology of Nkrumaism. In doing so, he provides answers to the questions listed above.

The lack of a **sociological basis** for socialism is clearly indicated by the social structure of Ghana. With an embryonic capitalist class and a marginal working class, Ghana was dominated by an enormous 'middle -class' (i.e. self-employed) population of farmers, petty-traders and artisans. In the cities it outnumbered the working class. To come to power the competing elites (chiefs, intelligentsia and educated-commoner's CPP) had to appeal to and hold this transitional and fluid mass.

It was this sociological fact that determined the **political character** of the CPP. It was not a petty-bourgeois party (since there was no developed, stable and class-conscious petty-bourgeoisie). It was in organisational form a **mass** party (open to all, and in appeal a **popular** party expressing the interests of all social groups). Its strategy for the economic and political de-colonisation of Ghana was one of **equilibrium** between economic subordination to imperialism and complete independence from it (impossible, in any case), between opposing interest groups and nascent classes. This was carried out in the early period mainly by means of the Party, which depended at first on basically democratic means. However, as easy finance ran out and economic strains appeared, the open character of the Party made it incapable of effective action. Thus, in the 1960s the State absorbed the Party (which had itself absorbed its farmers', trade union and other 'wings'), and Nkrumah continued his policy of equilibrium by means of the State and civil service. Mounting economic tension made it essential to fragmentise and isolate any possible opposition, and this implied as a corollary the increasing concentration of power in the hands of Nkrumah himself. The hope was that by carrying out modernisation from above it would be possible to avoid class conflict. However, in the process of fragmentation Nkrumah left himself with no power base at all and was thus exposed to any clique technically equipped to topple him.

Genoud considers in some detail the **political and economic strategy** of the Nkrumah regime. During the early period it was possible for it to both invest in the infra-structure and to meet demands for improved living standards, without changing the basically colonial structures and relationships. At the end of the 1950s, however, declining reserves and the falling price of cocoa obliged the regime to make its first fundamental choices between colonial subordination or growth and development. Consciousness of the necessity for choice was postponed by the preoccupation of the CPP with its political struggle for supremacy against opposition from the old intelligentsia, the wealthy cocoa farmers, regionalism and tribalism. And decisions were postponed since these implied conflicts with affected interest groups. However in 1962 the decisions were made and Ghana produced its first real Plan, representing a clarification, systematisation and acceleration of previous development trends.

It is within this context that Genoud makes his criticisms of Nkrumah's strategy. His main criticism on the economic side is not the 'compromising' with foreign capital as represented in the Volta Dam project, but the failure to follow a systematic policy of self-supporting growth, of closer economic controls, greater efforts to balance trade and a greater **independence** from the world capitalist market. All this might well have made Ghana a more attractive proposition for that foreign private capital it needed, of the kind it needed. However, he says, Nkrumah's stress on the necessity for Pan-Africanism was economically justified, he did build an infrastructure, and the successor regime will be faced with the same dilemmas he faced.

On the political side he criticises the failure to combine 'Tactical Action' (state creation of the infrastructure) with 'Positive Action' (mass mobilisation through the Party). It was this failure that obliged Nkrumah to compensate for the decreasing possibility of action by a grotesque ideological inflation.

However, Genoud does not consider Nkrumah's **ideology** as just so much mystification (though he does not deny this element). Fundamentally, he developed a socialist ideology because

> *Capitalism has already had its turn in Africa, for 50 years, 100 years or more, and Africa is under-developed. In other words,* capitalism, as far as development is concerned, is seen as having already failed. (page 205).

Ghanaian 'socialism' deserves to be taken more seriously than that of other African countries firstly because of the greater development – the very real existence – of Ghana, and secondly because of Nkrumah's pan-African vision, of the necessity for unity and common struggle against imperialism. For all that, 'Consciencism' must be considered a variety of 'African Socialism'. It is, says Genoud,

> *hardly possible to describe the African Society as essentially homogeneous, 'communalistic', free from antagonistic contradictions, threatened only by external forces, and, at the same time, present such conclusions as the result of a Marxist analysis.* (page 206).

This examination of the social, economic and political development of Ghana leads to a characterisation of the regime:

> *There is no good reason to identify socialism with a policy characterised by the leading role of the state in the industrialisation of the country and the substitution of a bureaucracy (which may not remain open for very long) for a national bourgeoisie as the country's leading group. To be sure, this is not capitalism either. It is, in fact, a new model which contains elements inherited from the colonial type of capitalist enterprise set up before independence and elements of Soviet socialism, but above all, it contains new and specific elements. These correspond to the problems posed by the passage of a traditional economy and society, which have been modified and altered by the colonial impact, to a more-advanced stage of economic and technical development.* (Page 204).

Finally, there is the perspective Genoud presents. For in so far as industrialisation does occur what is most likely to take place

> *is not so much an acceleration of class stratification but a polarisation between a bureaucracy of higher civil servants and directors-managers of state corporations as well as technicians, on the one hand, and a growing industrial and semi-industrial proletariat, on the other hand. At the same time, the huge farming communities will become increasingly directed in their activities by a network of state-run marketing boards. . .* (Page 202).

These conclusions bring to light the contradiction between the general tenor of Genoud's argument and that of Communists considering the same problems. For what Genoud is describing here is what Communists have called 'revolutionary-democratic regimes on the non-capitalist road of development'. Even in its more nuanced forms (see Sobolev, 'Some Problems of Social Progress', in *Africa: National and Social Revolution*, Prague, 1967), these concepts have tended to be based on simplistic analyses and prognoses of straight-line development that contrast sharply with the picture drawn by Genoud. Genoud therefore undermines the analysis we have made of Africa for the past ten to fifteen years. If we have ignored the New Left analyses because their errors and exaggerations were obvious to us, we cannot afford to ignore the challenge represented by this book.

A last thought concerns our assessment of Kwame Nkrumah. He seems to have fallen in grace as far as he was once held in our esteem. This might be understandable in the case of Ghanaians or other Africans who had no standard by which to measure him other than their own experience. But we have no right to any ambivalence of attitude. And Genoud enables us to see him as he was and is, not an unsuccessful Fidel Castro, but a radical nationalist whose vision was greater than the means for achieving it. He deserves our human respect, our Communist solidarity and our Marxist criticism.

Peter Feuermann.

We publish the above review as submitted by our contributor. But we really can't pass without challenge his implication that 'Communists' have in the past and now adopted a common 'attitude' or 'series of positions' towards the Ghanaian experience. This assumption cannot be justified by citing what was said by British or other Communists years ago about Nkrumah and comparing that with what was said more recently in this journal. The South African Communist Party, makes its own independent assessment of Ghanaian and other African developments; we cannot be held responsible for the views of Marxists elsewhere – nor they for ours!

FILM REVIEW

"MANDABI" – A FILM MADE IN AFRICA

(Shown at the 13th London Film Festival, 1969)

Africa on the cinema screen is no new phenomenon. Our people have for decades served as backdrops for Tarzan and safari films, and have been portrayed either as loyal servants or superstitious sub-humans. The stereotype of a less than human creature was inevitable in the colonial era, for it served as an explanation to the ordinary man for gross plunder and inhuman treatment of their fellow men.

Now, even though most of Africa is still beset with the unenviable heritage of colonial backwardness, the liberating effect of our political independence is already becoming evident.

Mandabi (The Money Order) is an exciting example of the new breath that comes from Africa after centuries of stifling subjugation. The film is based on a novel by the Senagalese novelist, Osmane Sembene, who also directs the film.

Skillfully and compassionately, Africa with its heritage of illiteracy and semi-feudal customs but yearning for the advances of mankind's progress, is described. A man receives a money order from his nephew who had gone to Paris to work 'as there is no work in Dakar' as he says in his letter to his uncle. Political independence hasn't magically solved the problems of poverty and unemployment. Feudal customs still prevail. But this society is not static and new social strata have begun to emerge even in the villages. The new existence brings its own problems, and traditional society and traditional attitudes however easy-going and even somewhat attractive, are not romanticised by Sembene.

Mamadou Guye plays Dieng, the tragic-comic hero of the story. In an atmosphere of stultifying inactivity that is captured by the camera drifting along leisurely, Dieng groans, burps, twitches his face and sweats in the African heat. One almost gets restless watching the enforced lethargy amongst the villagers who have no work. But the villagers, especially the women, have still a sense for beauty, and exquisite costumes add to their sensuous grace. Comic by-play by Mamadou Guye and little sidelights on the simple living and demands of feudal customs maintain interest in a situation where nothing is really happening.

The arrival of the money order from Paris brings excitement into the village. Hopes of loans and assistance are kindled by knowledge that there is money within the village. This is the situation that Sembene uses in a masterly fashion to describe the village and the social morality of different economic strata. The ordinary villagers are like pesty flies hovering around a sticky sweet, but they are not vicious. Less harmless is the authoritative Iman (priest) who gives the impression that Dieng is almost obliged to give him a 50 franc loan. The local storekeeper slowly but ravenously fleeces Dieng of whatever he has. However, it is the suave French speaking businessman – representative of the aspirant new African bourgeoisie – who with calm finesse and a cool arrogance vulturously waits for the kill. Sembene brilliantly depicts this character and the naive trust of Dieng for the busy, rich and educated businessman.

Interspersed amongst these main characters are short accounts of Dieng's encounters with lumpen elements like the fake photographer and the spiv outside the bank.

Sembene's great achievement is that he so successfully portrays all these forces without being didactic. His sympathies are undoubtedly with the villagers whose simple customs and unsophisticated behaviour is their humanity. Yet this aspect is not romanticised, as it is shown to contribute to the general material and social impoverishment of the people. In minute detail the extravagant architecture of the mosque and exquisite costumes and jewels are shown, but one is always aware of the poverty and hunger that exists. The poverty needs to be solved, but how?

From Dieng's original deft movements as he straightens his special gown when he sets off to cash his unexpected money order through to his haggard walk, one feels the tragedy of his simplicity. The comdey moves on to tragedy. Then, just when a mood of total pathos exists, Sembene shows ths simple, placid villager's anger as he bursts out that there is no room for honesty, and he too will become a scoundrel.

The comedy and pathos is transformed into a political message by the postman who in a matter of fact way suggests to Dieng that change is required.

'Who will change things? Dieng asks

'You'

'Me?'

'Yes, you and your wives'

'My wives . . . . . . ?' Dieng is puzzled but not shocked. The ferment has begun.

The film, *Mandabi* is a good example of the non-neutrality of art; in this instance the artist has used his specialised skill in the service of society – art is employed as a medium to move society to progress.

Audiences in Africa will recognise the characters in *Mandabi* and the film's message will not go unheeded.

H.P.

THE RIGHT TO FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

Have oppressed peoples the right to fight for national freedom and independence from colonialism? The answer will seem self-evident to most of our readers. The question was however discussed at length recently in the United Nations.

We reprint this account of the debate (then unfinished) from the official U.N. publication Objective: Justice *(Vol 1. No 1)*

The United Nations Charter, of course, not only emphasises and provides machinery for the peaceful settlement of international disputes among States, but both in letter and in spirit it encourages peaceful procedures for the evolution of society towards the goals of 'social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom'. Given this peace-orientation, the question often arises, in both a philosophical as well as a political context, as to how far the use of force to attain their independence by dependant peoples is compatible with the law and the spirit of the Charter.

References to this question were made in a recent meeting of the 1969 Special Committee which is engaged in drafting a set of principles intended to codify international law concerning 'friendly relations and cooperation among States, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations'.

The Soviet member of the 31-nation Special Committee, Lev I. Mendelevich, who dealt with the question at some length, defended the right of peoples under colonial domination to fight for their liberation by all possible means, including armed force, if the colonial Powers refused to recognise the right to self-determination of these peoples, or continue to repress their natural desire for independence.

Basing his arguments on historical, political, legal and philosophical factors, Mr. Mendelevich recalled that many countries of the world, including the United States, Algeria, Mexico, and the Netherlands, had used armed force in their struggle for independence. These were now great and respected countries, he said, and asked why, if their armed struggle for self-determination had been recognized, that of the people of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea (Bissau), for example, was not?

Mr. Mendelevich also recalled that the right of peoples to fight against colonial domination had been recognized by the General Assembly in the 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and by the Security Council which had recommended to all States to give moral and material assistance to liberation movements in southern Africa. A resolution adopted by the Security Council this year had called on South Africa to withdraw its administration from Namibia before 4 October 1969 and had requested all States to increase their moral and material assistance to the people of Namibia in their struggle against foreign occupation.

Mr. Mendelevich described as 'fallacious' the arguments of those who denied the legitimacy of an armed struggle by colonial peoples, becasue this struggle was not considered an end in itself, but as a means of achieving a legal status.

It was also fallacious, he said, to consider this struggle as an uprising against lawful authority and as a violation of the territorial integrity of the metropolitan Powers. When people were oppressed, he stated, a new legitimacy replaced that of the metropolitan Power which had seized colonies by the unlawful use of force The representative of the Soviet Union added that the principle of international law concerning friendly relations and cooperation must not be applied to independent States alone, but must be extended also to the nearly 20 million peoples still under foreign domination.

The representative of Romania, Gheorghe Secarin, speaking on the same issue called for the recognition of the legitimacy of armed struggle by colonial peoples towards the right to self-determination.

In a brief intervention on the same point, Henry Darwin, of the United Kingdom, said that the use of armed force by colonial peoples in their struggle for self-determination was precluded by the provisions of Chapter XI of the Charter, which recognizes the existence of Non-Self-Governing Territories as a 'sacred trust' and provides for the progressive development of subject peoples towards self-government.

LENINISM AND THE WORLD REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS TODAY

Under the above title an international conference was held by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, from February 23 - 27 1970. It was attended by guests from more than fifty countries, including practically every European country, a number of Asian countries, notable among them being the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and from North and South America. Our document is taken from the contribution by Michael Harmel of South Africa.

The hundred years that have passed since the birth of Vladimir Ilyitch Lenin have seen the most far-reaching changes in human history.

In these tempestuous times, the way of life and thought of humanity has changed and is still changing, in a fundamental and radical way, and at a speed hitherto unknown and undreamt of.

Of course these changes are the product of many factors, and of the efforts of thousands and millions of people.

But no single individual of our times has done more to change the world, by his deeds and words, than Lenin himself.

This was because Lenin saw and understood the processes of history with a keener and more profound vision than any of his contemporaries; and because in accordance with the precept of his teacher, the great revolutionary Karl Marx, he acted with single-minded dedication to put his ideas into practice.

A remarkable example is to be found in Lenin's grasp of and approach to the national and colonial question.

* * *

At the beginning of this century, and of Lenin's public activities a handful of industrialised nations had parcelled out the entire world between themselves. Their vast empires seemed to be permanent and stable; their 'right' to conquer, govern, and ruthlessly exploit hundreds of millions of non-European peoples and indoctrinate them with their bourgeois and racialist concepts, their laws, religions and customs—under the guise of 'civilisation'—these things were unquestioned.

Even at conferences of European socialist parties and gatherings of the Second International, these questions were barely discussed. The 'national question' was considered, mainly, to refer to the problem of oppressed nationalities or minorities in Europe. Occasional debates were held on what would be the correct 'colonial policy' for a socialist government, the more humanitarian delegates demanding various democratic and administrative reforms. It seems scarcely to have occurred to most of them that the peoples of the colonies would arise and win the fight for their own freedom and independence long before the workers in the metropolitan imperialist countries gained power.

Lenin's firmness of principle on the right of oppressed nations to self-determination is well known. He was rightly intolerant of the least concession to racialism within the labour movement. It was 'ridiculous' he said to imagine that 'men who belong to oppressor nations and do not uphold the right of oppressed nations to self-determination are capable of following a socialist policy.' Socialists must not only uphold that right but 'render determined support . . . to democratic movements for national liberation and assist their uprising.'

(The National Liberation Movement in the East)

But his vision extended much further. He saw the hundreds of millions of oppressed and downtrodden colonialised peoples outside Europe not as objects of sympathy and humanitarian appeals, but as makers of world history; as a tremendous potential revolutionary force; merging with the revolutionary proletariat in the common fight against imperialism.

During the first world war, Lenin returned time and again to the crucial question of imperialism and colonialism. It was a war, he said, between a handful of predatory imperialist nations over the issue of who had the 'right' to oppress and exploit hundreds of millions of colonial slaves. He rendered an incalculable service to the world, and in particular to the majority of its inhabitants living in the colonies in his splendid enrichment and extension of Marxist theory—*Imperialism—The Highest Stage of Capitalism.* In this book, the product of tremendous research and original thinking, Lenin for the first time exposed the nature, the roots and characteristics of modern imperialism.

* * *

In this and other writings, Lenin laid the theoretical basis for the dismantling of the colonial system of imperialism. The Great October Socialist Revolution, led by Lenin and his comrades of the Bolshevik Party, struck a tremendous blow for the practical achievement of national liberation by all oppressed people.

The October Revolution opened a fatal breach in the structure of world imperialist domination It set a brilliant example of this former vast 'prison of nations' transformed into a family of free and equal nations. The establishment and consolidation of the first workers' socialist state provided the colonial peoples with a staunch nd powerful ally, irreconcilable enemy of all practices of oppression and racialism, whose strength and influence grew from year to year. It inspired millions with the will to fight for national liberation and the confidence that they could win that fight.

Thus the October Revolution began a process of revolutionary ferment and struggle that continued with increasing momentum, especially after the tremendous achievements of the Soviet state in the second world war, the defeat of the fascist axis, the liberation of East Europe, China, Korea and Vietnam. A tidal wave of national liberation revolution swept practically the whole continent of Asia to political independence in the fifties.

That tidal wave came to Africa in the sixties, forcing the imperialists to retreat from political domination in one African country after another, until today we have left the Portuguese colonies and the white minority colonialist regimes of the South, all of them now the scenes of bitter armed struggles for national liberation.

It is true that most serious problems face the newly-independent African countries. Imperialism has left a terrible heritage of mass poverty, stagnant economies, tribal enmities, illiteracy. It still dominates Africa economically and for many of our states true independence still has to be won. But none of these things should blind us to the magnitude of Africa's achievement. Political independence was the condition, the key for future advance. The clear-headed patriots of Africa are more and more realising and paying tribute to the importance of Leninism and the fraternal support of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries in advancing our continuing struggle for complete independence, African unity and social revolution.

• • •

The African Revolution is an integral part of the world revolutionary process. It is interdependent with the anti-imperialist struggles of our brothers in Asia and Latin America, the revolutionary working class in the imperialist countries, with the growing strength and cohesion of the socialist countries.

When we think of the impact of Leninism, of its growing influence in the world, we are apt to think only, or mainly, in terms of the actual political and educational work of the Marxist-Leninist Parties. But, supplementing and greatly extending this work, there are a great many indirect ways in which the impact and influence of Leninism make themselves felt.

If you look at Africa today you will not find a great many Marxist-Leninist, working class parties. There are a number of objective reasons for this, not least of which is the deliberate retardation of African economies by the colonialists, so that in many of our countries the working class is small, or non-existent.

Yet, more and more, African countries whose leaders are genuinely determined on maintaining and consolidating their national independence are being impelled by the harsh realities of the struggle to take radical measures against imperialism and capitalism, and towards socialist development. And one finds honest African leaders increasingly formulating policies whose content, if not whose language, reflects the influence of scientific socialism, of Marxism-Leninism.

In this sense, we should read the expression in the National Charter of the United Arab Republic, for example, in which socialism is referred to as a historical necessity. Yes, that was a conclusion reached not from books, but from the bitter experiences of the onslaught of imperialism and Zionism, and the betrayal of the nation by the Egyptian financial and commercial bourgeoisie. When African leaders like President Nyerere of Tanzania or Kaunda of Zambia—both of whose countries are in the line of attack by Fascist South Africa and Portugal talk about advancing to socialism, this is not the empty talk about 'African Socialism' unsupported by any action that used to be popular a few years back. They actually take radical and far-reaching measures to nationalise enterprises and newspapers owned by foreign monopolies, measures of radical economic and agrarian reform against the capitalists and other exploiters and in favour of the toiling masses.

Lenin once said that Russia learnt that Marxism was the only correct revolutionary theory 'literally through suffering.' I think that Africa is going through the same hard school today. But we shall, I believe, learn quickly, for revolution is a great forcing house of ideas, and Africa must imperatively undergo a deep-reaching process of revolution if she is going to avert a return to the living death of colonialism. It is sometimes said that the newly-independent countries have to choose between alternative paths of development, capitalist or socialist. But this is not a true choice. The first decade of African independence has taught us the undeniable truth that the capitalist path means first the loss of independence and secondly the stultification of development. Imperialism does not want to see true development in Africa; it wants only to extract African wealth and exploit cheap African labour.

That is why I predict confidently that the countries of Africa in the years immediately ahead will witness a great flowering of authentic scientific socialist movements and ideas, coping boldly and imaginatively, in the true Leninist spirit, with the formidable and sometimes unprecedented problems which face us. Mastering the rich and universally valid concepts and works of Marxism-Leninism will be of invaluable aid in this task, but only if this science is creatively applied to the actual conditions and problems of the various regions and the continent as a whole.

Allow me to illustrate my meaning by referring to the earlier development of our own Party.

The South African Communist Party celebrates its fiftieth anniversary in 1971. In fact its origins go back even earlier, for the main force of the Party was the International Socialist League, formed in 1915, by militants who broke with the South African Labour Party and denounced the imperialist war.

But it should be remembered that, coming from the Labour Party, nearly all the members belonged to the white minority. They were militant trade unionists and firm belivers in socialism, but they had little understanding of the problems, oppression and aspirations of the indigenous Africans among whom they lived and who made up the great bulk of the population.

Moreover, although included in their ranks were fine and talented Marxists such as David Ivon Jones, they also included many who were near-Marxists or non-Marxists—syndicalists, anarchists, followers of Daniel de Leon. I imagine this is true of the early history of some other Parties, especially in the English-speaking countries. Lenin's dynamic ideas on imperialism, colonialism and the importance of national liberation struggles were not well known or understood.

Hence they were inclined to neglect the national struggle, which is of course of crucial importance in our country. They regarded the demands of the African National Congress for votes, land and equality for Africans as a 'diversion' from the real struggle for 'socialism' which would solve all problems. Eventually, and after some severe internal struggles, the Party found its true path. The influence of the Comintern, the pressure of young African Marxists like Albert Nzula, Moses Kotane and J.B. Marks, and the sharp lessons of life, made the Party realise the illusion of bringing about a revolution in South Africa through the instrumentality of a privileged minority of white workers—an 'aristocracy of labour'. In 1928 the Party placed at the head of its programme the winning of majority, African rule.

Our country presents a complex picture. The white minority, its government and monopoly-capitalist class, exhibit all the features of an imperialist state. Yet side by side with them, within the same state frontier, the majority of people are forced to live in typical colonial conditions. This is what the Party's 1962 Programme calls 'colonialism of a special type'. The central and immediate task of the Communists is to take part in the national democratic revolution. It is acknowledged by friend and foe alike that the South African Communist Party stands in the vanguard of the struggle for national liberation. The white state, aided by its imperialist backers, has responded to the mass backing for this struggle by resorting to methods of the most brutal terror. And this in turn has convinced the oppressed people and their leaders that there is no way to freedom except through armed struggle. They have established the National Liberation Army, Umkhonto we Sizwe, which for the past two years has been in action against the enemy on several fronts. Their just cause is backed by the great majority of the people of South Africa and the whole world. However long and bitter the war it is sure to end in victory for the working people of our country and the overthrow of the hated regime of apartheid and white domination.

Though the South African Communist Party is deeply involved in this life-and-death struggle it has not been unmindful of its internationalist duties. It participates in the activities of the international Communist movement. Its quarterly journal *The African Communist*, widely distributed in Africa and further afield, strives to spread the liberating ideas of Leninism, and Marxist analyses of African and world developments, throughout the continent.

* * *

I began by remarking on the extraordinary changes that Lenin and Leninism have brought about in the world—changes infinitely for the better. Even those whose material conditions have not changed much are changed men and women, for they too hope for and believe in change, fight and suffer for it.

Naturally we are not satisfied with these changes. That is the very nature of Leninism, the science of change. That is its secret of perpetual renewal. We cannot rest while national or class oppression remains in the world, until all forms of human exploitation have been banished.

Even then, we Leninists will still find fresh revolutionary tasks to accomplish.

LABOUR MONTHLY

Founded 1921 Editor: R. Palme Dutt

A Marxist commentary on political events with an international reputation over 49 years in the cause of national liberation and socialism

3s. 6d. monthly — £1 half-yearly subscription — £2 yearly
(special students' rate: 17s. 6d. half yearly, £1 15s. yearly)
all post free (surface mail) from

DEPT. AC., 134 BALLARDS LANE
LONDON, N.3, ENGLAND

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Please accept our warmest congratulations on the Tenth Anniversary of *The African Communist.*

All through the past decade *The African Communist* has played a role of the utmost importance and his been highly instrumental in a sharper focusing of the ideological problems of the African Revolution, as well as for a deeper knowledge both of the South African situation and of the African reality. *The African Communist* is a fighting contribution to the understanding of the objective circumstances of the African peoples' struggle against imperialism and oppression. It make stimulating reading and brings us closer to the heroic march of the African masses towards the goal of national liberation.

The Venezuelan communists highly evaluate your work. Let the present message be a witness of our fraternal identification with all the rank and file and the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party and the whole of your people.

With revolutionary greetings,

Eduardo Gallegos Mancera
Secretary International Relations
Caracas. *Communist Party of Venezuela.*

To *The African Communist* magazine, in homage to the important work you have been doing through the years, diffusing throughout Africa the ideology of Marxism-Leninism, struggling for the unity of all revolutionary forces in the African continent.

With sincere wishes for a further extension and strengthening of your activity.

Joao Mendes
January 1970.

(Inscription on the fly-leaf of his new book *La Revolution en Afrique,* Paris 1970, presented to this journal and reviewed in this issue).

I am an African political science lecturer and on various occasions I have had the pleasure of reading *The African Communist.* So far I have found the magazine very interesting because of its objectivity, factual articles and penetrating analyses of African problems.

African Revolutionary

Printed by Nationales Druckhaus Berlin

V.I.LENIN

COLLECTED WORKS

the English edition will be completed in 45 volumes in the anniversary year, 1970. Volumes 1–42 are already available
18s. 6d. each volume

SELECTED WORKS

in one volume

includes "State and Revolution", "Imperialism", "Left-Wing Communism", etc. 800 pp

30s.

BRITISH LABOUR AND BRITISH IMPERIALISM

an anthology of Lenin's writings on Britain, arranged into chapters according to subject

35s.

full catalogue available on request

LAWRENCE & WISHART
46 Bedford Row, London W.C.I.